THE CHILLING ARCHIVES OF HORROR COMICS!™

HAUNTED HORROR™

EL DIABLO
SPECIAL GUEST HOST

#30

RICCO

Special Guest Host

EL DIABLO

...AHHHHH, COMPANY!... SO GOOD OF YOU TO JOIN ME... PLEASE, WATCH THE CLOSING DOORS! WELCOME TO THE 30TH "SMOKIN'" EDITION OF HAUNTED HORROR! WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO WITNESS IS OUR HELLACIOUS HALLOWEEN SPECTACULAR! ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF. I WILL BE YOUR HUMBLE HOST, EL DIABLO! THAT'S RIGHT, "THE LORD O' DARKNESS", OR SO IT'S BEEN SAID!!!... WE HAVEN'T A MOMENT TO LOSE, SO LET'S RATTLE THOSE JACK-O'-LANTERNS N' ROAST SOME UNFORTUNATES!... IT'S TIME TO PLAY!... PLEASE FOLLOW ME N' FEAST YER BLOODSHOT EYES ON THE MOST NIGHTMARISH, BONE-CRACKIN' PRE-CODE TALES OF TORTUROUS TERROR EVER ASSEMBLED! ...WHAT LIES IN THESE PULSATING PAGES ARE THE TOPICS I HOLD DEAR... THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS, ALL BEAUTIFULLY, BUT DISASTROUSLY, ILLUSTRATED WITH DEADLY SCALPEL-LIKE PRECISION... TRY AS YOU MAY, BUT YOU CAN'T LOOK AWAY!!!
WELCOME TO
Florida
HAHAHAAAAAAHAAAAAA!!!

Join the hordes at
Horror Comics: 1950s and Beyond!

Look for another spine-tingling issue of *Haunted Horror* in two months!

If you collect horror comics and other Golden Age fare, we're always looking for scans for use in our books and comics. Please contact Craig Yoe through Facebook.

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On the cover, *Dynamic Comics* #8, circa 1943. Artist: Gus Ricca. Chesler/Dynamic.

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NIGHTMARE CARNIVAL

ANIMALS

FREAKS

CLOWNS

THRILLS

RIDES

LAUGHS

FUN

LET MY BROTHER GO! HE DID NOTHING TO YOU! WHY DO YOU HOUND US AND RUIN OUR PROPERTY, YOU FIENDS!

YOU TRIED TO UPROOT OUR GRAVES AND DRIVE OUR MASTER, DU MORT, FROM HIS ANCIENT PROPERTY! THIS IS OUR ANSWER! DEATH TO THE LEBRUNS AND DESTRUCTION OF THE CARNIVAL!

IT STOOD THERE LIKE AN INSULT AND MOCKED THEM: THE LAND WITH IT'S BROKEN GRAVE-STONES, THE LAST RESTING PLACE OF OLD VICTIMS OF THE GUILLOTINE, AND THE TWO-HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD HOUSE. THE BROTHERS LEBRUN CURSED, FOR THEY WANTED THE PROPERTY TO EXPAND THEIR CARNIVAL, BUT THE OLD TENANT WOULD NOT DIE. "EACH MAN HAS HIS PRICE... PERHAPS HE WILL SELL," THEY HOPED, AS THEY ENTERED THE CRUMBLING RUIN OF CHATEAU DU MORT... ORIGINALLY, THE LEBRUN BROTHERS HAD NOT EXPECTED TO DEAL WITH DEATH. THEIR FIRST VISIT TO JULES DU MORT WAS STRICTLY BUSINESS . . .

THE BROTHERS LEBRUN, I PRESUME! COME IN, I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU! BUT STAND CLEAR OF THE MARKS ON THE FLOOR! I DO NOT WISH TO SEE YOU HARMED.

M'SIEU DU MORT.. THEN YOU KNOW WHY WE HAVE COME! IT IS ABOUT THE PROPERTY!

YES, YOU CANNOT WAIT UNTIL I DIE! YOU WANT MY HOUSE, MY LAND... ALL I RECEIVED WHEN I RETIRED AS STATE EXECUTIONER AND STOPPED SERVING MADAME LA GUILLOTINE! YOU WILL NOT HAVE IT!

The Beyond #28, September 1954. Art: Ken Rice. Publisher: Ace Magazines.

BUT M'SIEU DU MORT, WE ARE OFFERING THREE TIMES WHAT THE PROPERTY IS WORTH!

I WILL NOT SELL FOR A HUNDRED TIMES ITS VALUE! I HAVE A SACRED TRUST! DO YOU THINK I WOULD DESERT THAT OUTCAST BAND OF BEHEADED ONES LYING BENEATH THEIR BROKEN GRAVESTONES? I AM THEIR CARETAKER!

LOOK, SIX... SEVEN TIMES THE VALUE! YOU CAN LIVE LIKE A KING FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!

HERE, I AM KING! MY STUDIES OF THESE MYSTERIES HAVE BROUGHT ME MASTERY OVER THE DEAD! YOUR MONEY WILL NEVER TEMPT ME...NOR WILL THOSE GRAVES BE UPROOTED TO MAKE WAY FOR A NOISY CARNIVAL!

HOT BLOOD POUNDED IN GAXTON LEBRUN'S TEMPLES AS HE STRODE FORWARD . . .

YOU MADMAN! I'D LIKE TO BREAK YOUR NECK! BUT DEAD OR ALIVE, I'LL HAVE YOUR PROPERTY FOR MY CARNIVAL!

YOU'LL RUE THE DAY YOU SET HANDS ON ME! WE'LL SEE WHO'S MORE POWERFUL! HO, YOU ROTTING DEAD! RISE FROM YOUR UNHALLOWED GRAVES! YOUR MASTER CALLS!

THE SURROUNDING EARTH SHOOK OUTSIDE AND GRAVES BEGAN TO YAWN . . .

HO, YOU ROTTING DEAD...! RISE, RISE! YOUR MASTER CALLS!

WE HEAR, OH MASTER! WE COME!

THE BROTHERS LEBRUN STOOD PETRIFIED AS THE DOOR OF DEATH ENTERED, AND THEN AS THEY TURNED . . .

DU MORT...I WAS JOKING! SEND THESE DEVILS BACK! I WON'T BOTHER YOU AGAIN!

TAKE THESE SWINE AWAY! THROW THEM OFF MY PROPERTY. IF THEY RETURN, I ORDER YOU TO TEAR THEM LIMB FROM LIMB! NOW, GO!

WHILE A GRUESOME GALLERY WATCHED, THE LEBRUN BROTHERS WERE PUSHED AND DRAGGED ACROSS THE ROTTED FIELDS . . .

PIERRE HAS FAINTED... HIS NERVES COULD NOT STAND THE SHOCK, FRANCOIS!

I SHALL NEVER FORGET THIS NIGHT AS LONG AS I LIVE! WE ARE LUCKY TO COME AWAY ALIVE, BROTHER!

YOU HEARD OUR MASTER! YOU MUST NEVER RETURN AGAIN ON PAIN OF DEATH!

NEVER AGAIN! I SWEAR IT! WE'LL NEVER SET FOOT ON DU MORT'S PROPERTY AGAIN!

SUDDENLY THE LIVING DEAD WERE GONE, AND AS THE BROTHERS WATCHED...

WHAT HELLISH POWER THIS DU MORT HAS! WE'LL NEVER GET HIS PROPERTY!

I'VE ONLY BEGUN TO FIGHT! I'LL NOT BE FRIGHTENED BY THE OLD FOOL'S MAGIC! LISTEN TO ME, BROTHERS!

QUICKLY GAXTON EXPLAINED...

BUT WHAT IF DU MORT SHOULD EVER FIND OUT?

DON'T WORRY, IT WILL ALL LOOK PERFECTLY LEGAL! AFTER I BRIBE THE COUNTY INSPECTOR, DU MORT'S PROPERTY WILL BE CONDEMNED!

MAIN ENTRANCE

THE NEXT DAY A LARGE SUM EXCHANGED HANDS...

PROPERTY CONDEMNED

AND SHORTLY AFTER THIS...

I TOLD YOU HOW EASY IT WOULD BE! I ALREADY HAVE A SEALED BID IN FOR THE PROPERTY! IN A FEW DAYS THE LAND SHALL BE IN OUR HANDS.

YES, BUT WHAT WILL DU MORT DO? I DO NOT THINK HE WILL ACCEPT THE SALE WITHOUT A STRUGGLE!

THIS PROPERTY HAS BEEN CONDEMNED BY ORDER OF THE COUNTY INSPECTOR

FRANCOIS WAS RIGHT. FOR THAT VERY NIGHT...

M'SIEU LEBRUN... YOU MUST COME AT ONCE! SOME TERRIBLE FIENDS ARE FRIGHTENING OUR CUSTOMERS AWAY OUTSIDE THE BOX OFFICE!

WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY? FIENDS? COME ON, FRANCOIS... PIERRE! WE MUST LOOK INTO THIS!

AT THE CARNIVAL ENTRANCE...

NAME OF A DEVIL! THAT DU MORT HAS A NERVE! FRANCOIS, BRING ME AN AXE! I'LL SHOW HIM WHAT I THINK OF HIS LITTLE JOKE!

LOOK, SOME OF HIS LIVING-DEAD CREATURES ARE RUNNING AWAY! IT WAS THEIR WORK ALL RIGHT!

THIS CARNIVAL HAS BEEN CONDEMNED BY ORDER OF JULES DU MORT AND ASSOCIATES

BUT WHAT WILL WE DO IF HE SENDS THOSE HORRORS INTO OUR CARNIVAL?

OUR CARNIVAL GANG WILL TEAR THEM APART! BESIDES, A LITTLE EXCITEMENT AND FRIGHT WILL GIVE US PUBLICITY... BRING MORE BUSINESS! IT'S ALL TO OUR BENIFIT!

LATER, AS THE BROTHERS CHECKED THEIR HUGE SHOW...

AAAAREEEE! HELLLP!

WHAT THE...! SOME MORE TROUBLE! WHAT COULD POSSIBLY HAPPEN IN THE TUNNEL OF LOVE?

EXIT

TUNNEL OF LOVE

OOOH, THE TERRIBLE BEASTS IN THERE! SUCH HORRIBLE FACES...! AND THEY THREATEN TO KILL US!

I'M GOING IN TO INVESTIGATE! I'M SURE IT'S NOTHING BUT THEIR IMAGINATION!

PIERRE'S BOAT DRIFTED SILENTLY THROUGH THE SLOW MOVING CHANNEL. SUDDENLY IT BEGAN TO ROCK...

AAAAIII! I-I CAN'T SEE A THING, BUT THE BOAT'S SHAKING, AS IF SOMEONE WERE GETTING IN! WHO ARE YOU? SPEAK!

A SCREAM FROZE IN PIERRE'S THROAT AS THE STRANGE VISITORS GLOWED WITH A GANGRENOUS LUMINOSITY...

DU MORT, OUR MASTER, SENT US! THE LEBRUN BROTHERS THREATEN OUR EXISTENCE!

THEREFORE YOU MUST DIE... TO SHOW THE OTHERS THAT WE MUST NOT BE TOYED WITH!

NO NO! LET ME GO!

NOOOO! DON'T TOUCH ME! YAAARRGG!

HURRY! DU MORT WANTS US BACK AT ONCE!

PANIC-STRICKEN BY PIERRE'S GHASTLY SCREAMS, HIS BROTHERS WAITED AT THE EXIT...

THERE'S PIERRE'S BOAT! B-BUT IT'S EMPTY!

MAYBE HE GOT OFF IN THE TUNNEL? MAYBE HE—OH NO! NO!

THIS IS DU MORT'S WORK! THE MASTER OF EVIL HAS STRUCK! WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW, GAXTON?

CLOSE THE RIDE DOWN AND CALL THE POLICE! THE KILLERS MAY STILL BE WITHIN THE TUNNEL! POOR PIERRE SHALL BE AVENGED!

EXIT

BUT A SEARCH OF THE LIGHTED TUNNEL REVEALED NOTHING . . .

IT'S INCREDIBLE! YOU SAY NO ONE LEFT THE TUNNEL AFTER YOUR BROTHER'S BODY WAS FOUND?

NO ONE! TELL YOUR MEN THERE IS NO OTHER EXIT AND THESE WALLS ARE SOLID ROCK! NO SENSE LOOKING ANY FURTHER! MY BROTHER WAS KILLED BY SOME INHUMAN FIENDS!

AS PIERRE'S FUNERAL CORTEGE WOUND PAST DU MORT'S PROPERTY, TWO DAYS LATER . . .

GAXTON, LEAVE HIM ALONE! HAVEN'T WE SUFFERED ENOUGH?

I CAN'T STAND THAT UGLY GHOUL! I MUST WIPE THAT GRIN OFF HIS FACE!

LISTEN, YOU OFFSPRING OF THE DEVIL! I HAVE A JUDGMENT ON YOUR LAND! TOMORROW MY MEN ARE COMING IN TO CLEAR IT, AND LEVEL THOSE GRAVES! I'LL STRIP YOU OF ALL YOUR HELLISH POWERS!

FOOL! I STILL HAVE THE HOUSE ...AND SO LONG AS I LIVE, I STAY IN IT! HA! HA! HA!

IN A FEW DAYS, WHERE THE BROKEN, UNHALLOWED GRAVES HAD ONCE STOOD . . .

NOW DU MORT'S EVIL STRENGTH IS AT AN END! THE GRAVES OF ALL HIS GUILLOTINED CUTTHROATS LIE UNDER TWO FEET OF SOLID CONCRETE!

I WISH WE COULD BE SURE OF THAT, GAXTON! SUPPOSE THIS ONLY INFURIATES DU MORT AND HE RETALIATES AGAINST US?

THAT VERY NIGHT, AS THE CONCRETE HARDENED BENEATH AN OVERCAST MOON . . .

SPIRITS OF THE DAMNED, HEAR ME! IN THE NAME OF LUCIFER, BEELZEBUB, AND THE BLACK LEGIONS OF HELL, SPLIT YOUR GRAVES AND RISE! AALEM...ZOROSTRU... GAALEV... DAVYATA! RISE!

TURBULENT FORCES WRITHED IN THE EARTH. THE CONCRETE BUCKLED, CRACKED...AND FINALLY . . .

WE RISE, MASTER DU MORT!

WE HEAR YOU!

WHAT IS YOUR WISH, O, GREAT ONE!

TO THE HATED CARNIVAL AT ONCE! IT WAS THE LEBRUN BROTHERS WHO IMPRISONED YOU BENEATH THIS SLAB! DESTROY! BURN! KILL!

MOMENTS LATER, AT THE CARNIVAL ENTRANCE . . .

Y!!!!! LOOK...! THOSE MONSTERS COMING THIS WAY! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

OUT OF MY WAY! I'M LEAVING THIS MAD CARNIVAL FOR GOOD!

TICKETS

NEITHER GAXTON NOR FRANCOIS COULD HALT THE TERROR WHICH SWEPT THROUGH THE CARNIVAL...

STOP/ DON'T RUN AWAY/ TURN ON THE BEASTS AND BEAT THEM DOWN/ WE CAN DESTROY THE WHOLE LOT OF THEM IF WE STICK TOGETHER!

GAXTON, YOU'RE MAD / THERE'S NO STOPPING THIS / I'M TAKING THE FERRIS WHEEL TO THE TOP TO ESCAPE THEM!

AS GAXTON WAS SWEPT ALONG BY THE MADDENED THRONG...

LEAVE ME ALONE! I'VE DONE NOTHING! NO, DON'T TOUCH ME!

THE LEBRUNS MUST BE DESTROYED / OUR GRAVES WILL BE VIOLATED AS LONG AS YOU EXIST! DEATH TO THE LEBRUNS!

AAAAEEEE!

WE HAVE DONE WELL, BROTHERS! THE CARNIVAL LIES IN RUINS! ONLY GAXTON LEBRUN HAS ESCAPED US... BUT NOT FOR LONG! COME, WE MUST RETURN TO OUR MASTER!

LATER, WHEN GAXTON RETURNED WITH A SMALL POLICE ARMY...

WHERE ARE ALL THESE CREATURES FROM THE GRAVE YOU TOLD ME ABOUT? TRUE, YOUR CARNIVAL IS DESTROYED, BUT WE MUST HAVE MORE EVIDENCE!

ISN'T THIS ENOUGH! HAVEN'T YOU HEARD THE PEOPLE? COME THEN, I'LL LEAD YOU TO THEIR BROKEN GRAVES!

BUT THERE WASN'T A SHRED OF EVIDENCE TO BE FOUND.

SEE, YOU ARE MISTAKEN/ IF THESE CREATURES ARE BURIED BENEATH THIS CONCRETE, THEY COULDN'T GET OUT! BUT TO SATISFY YOU, I SHALL LEAVE THE POLICE HERE TO GUARD THE PLACE!

IT IS DU MORT'S EVIL GENIUS / I CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW HE DOES IT! BUT ONCE AND FOR ALL HE MUST BE STOPPED!

GAXTON TOOK MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS. LATE THAT NIGHT...

TEN THOUSAND FRANCS IN ADVANCE FOR DU MORT'S DEATH! WHEN YOU RETURN WITH EVIDENCE THAT HE IS DESTROYED, YOU GET TWENTY THOUSAND MORE!

HE IS AS GOOD AS DEAD! WE HAVE NEVER FAILED YET, HAVE WE, MARCEL? IT WILL BE QUIET...ZUT... A KNIFE THRUST AND HE IS FINISHED! WE DO NOT WISH TO DISTURB THE POLICE!

CLICK!

LIKE PHANTOMS, THE TRIO SLIPPED PAST THE POLICE TO DU MORT'S HOME...

QUIET! THE OLD BAG OF BONES IS ASLEEP AT HIS DESK! THERE MUST BE NO OUTCRY!

SACRE! IT IS LIKE A TOMB IN THERE! PHAAH, I DO NOT LIKE ALL THOSE GENDARMES PARADING AROUND OUTSIDE!

ONLY A SIGH ESCAPED FROM DU MORT'S LIPS AS THE KNIFE PIERCED HIS HEART . . .

IT'S DONE, MY FRIENDS! WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH HIS BODY? WE CAN'T DRAG IT PAST THE POLICE!

LET'S STUFF HIM INTO ONE OF THE WALLS! THERE ARE PLENTY OF OPENINGS IN THIS OLD BARN! THE BODY WON'T BE FOUND FOR A HUNDRED YEARS!

REPORTING BACK TO GAXTON, THE KILLERS HANDED HIM PROOF . . .

WE TOOK THESE RINGS FROM HIS DEAD FINGERS! ARE YOU SATISFIED.. M'SIEU LEBRUN? IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE HE'S BURIED, I CAN—

ENOUGH, I DO NOT WISH TO HEAR! I'M SATISFIED... AND HERE'S THE MONEY! YOU'VE DONE ME A GREAT FAVOR!

SEVERAL WEEKS LATER, GAXTON'S REVENGE WAS COMPLETE . . .

AAAH, SO YOU HAVE FINALLY OBTAINED THE COURT ORDER GIVING YOU DU MORT'S PROPERTY? NOW WE CAN START WRECKING THE OLD HOUSE!

YES, DU MORT COULD NOT BE FOUND TO CONTEST THE DEED! THIS IS MY DAY OF TRIUMPH OVER THE OLD DEVIL! GIVE ME A HELMET AND START UP THE BULLDOZER! I WANT THE SATISFACTION OF BEING THE FIRST ONE TO SMASH INTO THE EVIL HOUSE!

WITH A THUNDEROUS ROAR, GAXTON SENT THE POWERFUL MACHINE PLUNGING INTO THE ROTTING MANSION . . .

HA, HA! SEE HOW IT CRACKS OPEN! I WISH DU MORT COULD SEE ME NOW!

THE HOUSE IS LIKE OLD CARDBOARD! GIVE IT FULL SPEED! WE'LL MEET YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE!

KRRAASH!

THE MOULDERING CHATEAU SHOOK TO ITS FOUNDATIONS AS THE BULLDOZER GROUND A PASSAGE THROUGH ITS VITALS. . .

HERE IT COMES LIKE A BATTERING RAM! I HOPE LEBRUN IS ALL RIGHT!

AT THIS RATE WE'LL HAVE IT WRECKED IN TWO DAYS!

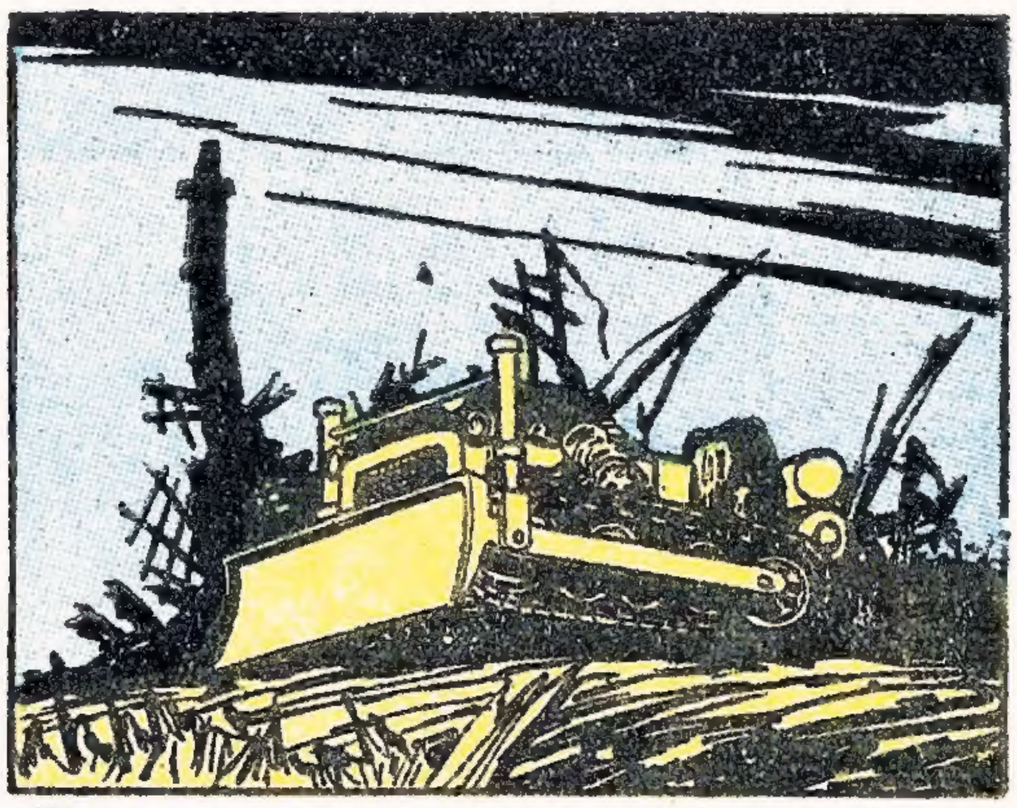
CRASH!

R-R-RUMBLE

SUDDENLY, THE IRON MONSTER BROKE THROUGH . . .

STOP IT! IT'S RUNNING WILD!

NAME OF THE DEVIL! LOOK WHO'S DRIVING IT! HE—HE'S DEAD, AND SO IS M'SIEU LEBRUN!



THE TALE SPREAD THROUGH THE PROVINCE... BUT ONLY THOSE WHO SAW, BELIEVED. AND EVERY TIME THEY PASS DU MORT'S PROPERTY, THEY HURRY, FEARFUL THAT OUT OF THE GROUND WOULD SPRING THE HORRORS OF MME. LA GUILLOTINE.

THE END

DEATH'S ALBUM
COME BACK, HUMAN! YOU HAVE TRESPASSED UPON THE UNKNOWN!
DESTROY YOUR CAMERA OF EVIL... OR BE DESTROYED!
NEVER! I WILL GAIN FAME AND FORTUNE WITH THIS CAMERA! I'M THE ONLY MAN WHO HAS PHOTOGRAPHED --- DEATH!
FATE REACHED OUT TO PLACE A FRIENDLY HAND ON ALEC MARSTON ALLOWING HIM TO PHOTOGRAPH A HORROR NEVER SEEN BY MORTAL EYES! HIS GREEDY MIND COULD NOT COPE WITH THIS INCREDIBLE MIRACLE AND AS THE FREE LANCE CAMERAMAN TURNED TO MURDER HE HIMSELF BECAME A VICTIM OF THE DEMONS!

Web of Evil #21, December 1954. Artist unknown. Publisher: Quality Comics.

OH, THE MID-WEST A GROUP OF NEWSMEN ARE SHOWN THROUGH A U.S. ATOMIC LABORATORY! AMONG THEM IS ALEC MARSTON, FREE LANCE PHOTOGRAPHER!

IF YOU GENTLEMEN WILL JUST FOLLOW ME I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE WE DO ALL OUR CHEMICAL RESEARCH!

NOTHING SENSATIONAL IN SHOOTING THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT! HM-M..."LAB PERSONNEL ONLY"! PERHAPS I'LL STUMBLE ON A SCOOP PHOTO IN THERE!

LABORATORY PERSONNEL ONLY KEEP OUT

WOW! AN ATOM FURNACE! THEY'VE NEVER ALLOWED SHOTS OF THAT BEFORE! I AM IN LUCK!

THEN, AS PHOTOGRAPHER MARSTON READIES HIS CAMERA...

THE CHAIN PULLEY...IT'S SNAPPED!

W-WE'RE DONE FOR!

GREAT SCOTT! SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG DOWN THERE!

YAAAA!

M-MY EYES... I CAN'T SEE!

CLICK!

WHEN THE STUNNED, BLINDED MARSTON REGAINS HIS SENSES...

T-THAT WAS SOME ACCIDENT! I GUESS I'M LUCKY TO BE ALIVE... THOSE POOR WORKERS DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE! SAY...I WONDER IF I PHOTOGRAPHED THE EXPLOSION!

THE SHUTTER IS TRIPPED... THERE'S A GOOD POSSIBILITY I DID CATCH THE ACTION IN MY LENS! OH, BOY...A SCOOP LIKE THIS WOULD BE WORTH PLENTY! GOT TO GET BACK TO MY DARKROOM AND GO TO WORK!

MARSTON'S HEAD REELS WITH DELIGHT AS HE DEVELOPS THE FILM IN HIS DARKROOM LATER!

THE DEVELOPER'S BRINGING SOMETHING OUT...IT'S THE *ATOM FURNACE!* AND THERE'S THE *EXPLOSION!* I AM IN LUCK...H-HUH? THOSE WIERD FIGURES... WHAT...WHO ARE THEY?

I-I MUST BE SEEING THINGS! YET...THOSE CREATURES *ARE THERE!* WHAT ON EARTH COULD IT MEAN...WHAT HAVE I STUMBLED UPON?

THOSE...DEMONS SEEM TO HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT THE ACCIDENT! THEY'RE REVELING IN THE DEATHS OF THOSE A-LAB WORKERS! *GREAT SCOTT!* COULD THEY BE DEATH'S EMISSARIES AT WORK?

HOW WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO PHOTOGRAPH THE... UNKNOWN? HM-M...PERHAPS THE EXPLOSION ITSELF AFFECTED THE LENS IN SOME WAY! I MUST FIND OUT...I MUST BE SURE! BUT HOW?

I KNOW...SOMEHOW I MUST PHOTOGRAPH ANOTHER CATASTROPHE IN WHICH A DEATH IS INVOLVED! IF THOSE CREATURES ARE WHAT I BELIEVE THEM TO BE...THEY'LL BE PRESENT!

BUT SUCH A PICTURE ASSIGNMENT IS NOT AN EASY ONE TO CAPTURE...AS ALEC MARSTON FINDS OUT THROUGH THE DAYS AHEAD!

CONFOUND IT...WHY DID THEY HAVE TO RESCUE THE FOOL! THIS WAS THE FIRST CHANCE I'D HAD IN WEEKS TO DISCOVER THE TRUTH BEHIND THAT INCREDIBLE PHOTO!

TIME AND PATIENCE FINALLY REWARD MARSTON!

ATTENTION CARS SIX, NINE AND ELEVEN! PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO BLEEKER AND KENT STREETS! TENEMENT FIRE REPORTED!

I KNOW THAT DISTRICT...THOSE FIRE TRAPS DOWN THERE SHOULD GO UP LIKE A TINDERBOX! PERHAPS I'M IN LUCK AT LAST!

SHE'S A FOUR ALARMER ALL RIGHT! SOMEBODY'S BOUND TO LOSE THEIR LIFE! I WONDER IF THOSE DEATH DEMONS ARE HERE! GUESS THAT'S SOMETHING MY CAMERA ALONE CAN TELL ME!

HAD MARSTON BEEN ABLE TO SEE WHAT HIS INCREDIBLE CAMERA WAS PHOTOGRAPHING HIS QUESTION WOULD HAVE BEEN ANSWERED!

EEEEE!

T-THE SMOKE... I CAN'T BREATHE!

I DON'T SEE THE DEVILS...BUT OF COURSE THEY WOULDN'T BE VISIBLE TO THE HUMAN EYE!

T-THE ROOF... IT'S CAVING IN...

YAAAA!

THE WALL OF TENEMENT... IT'S ABOUT READY TO TOPPLE OVER! I WONDER IF IT'S THOSE CREATURES' DOING?

SCATTER... SHE'S GONNA COME DOWN!

TOO LATE IS THE WARNING HEARD...AND THE DEMONS OF DEATH CLAIM MORE VICTIMS!

CRRRAAASHHH!

H-HELP!

That EVENING, MARSTON WORKS INTO THE EARLY HOURS OF THE MORNING DEVELOPING FILM OF THE CATASTROPHE! FINALLY...

T-THERE THEY ARE...THE DEATH DEMONS! MY SUSPICION WAS RIGHT...I'VE BECOME THE FIRST MAN TO PHOTOGRAPH *DEATH* IN ACTION!

SOMEHOW THE EXPLOSION AT THE A-PLANT HAS AFFECTED THE LENS, MAKING IT POSSIBLE TO FILM THE...UNKNOWN! HA, HA, HA...AND I'M THE ONLY MAN ON EARTH THAT POSSESSES THE SECRET! I'LL BECOME FAMOUS...WEALTHY!

I'LL MAKE AN ALBUM PORTRAYING THESE CREATURES AT WORK! IMAGINE THE VALUE OF SUCH A BOOK...ACTUAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE DEATH DEMONS GOING ABOUT THEIR MACABRE MISSION! HO, HO, HO...IT WILL BE WORTH A FORTUNE!

But THAT NIGHT AS ALEC MARSTON GLOATS OVER THE POWER OF HIS CAMERA...

ALEC MARSTON!

WHAT A MIRACLE OF POWER MY CAMERA HAS BROUGHT ME! WHY, I CAN MAKE AN *ALBUM* OF DEATH IN ACTUAL OPERATION AND SELL IT FOR *THOUSANDS!* YES, BUT I CAN'T WAIT FOR TRAGEDIES TO OCCUR...I MUST *MAKE* THEM HAPPEN!

EH, WHAT'S THAT? W-WHO'S THAT...?

SURELY YOU RECOGNIZE *DEATH'S DEMONS*, MARSTON! YOU HAVE SEEN US BEFORE...ON YOUR FILMS!

WE HAVE COME TO WARN YOU NOT TO TAMPER FURTHER WITH THE MYSTERIES BEYOND THE GRAVE! YOU MUST *DESTROY* YOUR CAMERA!

THE ACCIDENT AT THE ATOMIC PLANT HAS MADE IT A THING OF EVIL!

NO MORTAL HAS THE RIGHT TO PHOTO-GRAPH OUR ACTIONS!

NO, NO! I HAVE THE MOST VALUABLE CAMERA IN THE WORLD! IT'S *MINE!* YOU MUSTN'T TAKE IT FROM ME!

DESTROY IT, MARSTON! *YOU* YOURSELF MUST DESTROY IT!

HA! NOW I UNDERSTAND... YOU *CAN'T* TAKE IT FROM ME, CAN YOU? OF COURSE NOT! YOU ONLY EXIST IN THE WORLD OF THE *DYING* ...YOU'RE POWERLESS AGAINST A MAN NOT DOOMED TO DEATH!

GET OUT! GET OUT! NOTHING CAN STOP ME FROM PEERING IN ON YOUR MOVEMENTS! I'LL BE THE MOST CELEBRATED PHOTOGRAPHER ON EARTH WHEN MY ALBUM OF YOUR ACTIONS IS COMPLETE AND SHOWN TO THE WORLD!

COME! WE MUST GO! WE ARE POWERLESS TO MOVE AGAINST HIM NOW!

Then, AS THE VISITORS FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE LEAVE, THE MAN WITH THE MIRACLE CAMERA GOES WILD WITH DREAMS OF POWER!

HO! I'VE WON AND FORCED DEATH TO PERFORM FOR MY CAMERA LENS AT MY BIDDING! AH, BUT I MUST MAKE SURE I HAVE *PLENTY* OF WORK FOR HER! YES INDEED!

Daily Globe

COUNTY FAIR AUTO RACES TODAY

NEXT DAY AT THE COUNTY FAIR AUTO RACES...

PRESS! WANT SOME PICTURES OF THE RACING CARS!

SURE THING! TAKE ALL YOU WANT! THOSE ARE THE CARS FOR THE FOURTH RACE!

PERFECT, WHAT BETTER VICTIM FOR THE DEMONS OF DEATH THAN THE DRIVER IN CAR NUMBER *13*! HA! THIS WHEEL WILL SPIN OFF BEFORE HE'S DONE THREE LAPS!

AND LATER, DEATH'S CAMERA-MAN AWAITS THE "ACCIDENT"!

I'LL BET THE DEMONS OF DEATH ARE HOVERING ABOUT THE CAR NOW... WAITING, WAITING!

SUDDENLY...

THERE GOES THE WHEEL!

IT LOOKED LIKE A *PERFECT* PICTURE! I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO DEVELOP IT!

SOON AFTERWARD AT MARSTON'S HOME DARK-ROOM...

EXCELLENT! EXCELLENT! I'VE GOT A *SCOOP ACTION SHOT* OF THE ACCIDENT! A RARE ADDITION FOR MY ALBUM COLLECTION! THE DEATH OF DRIVER JOHNSON IN *CAR THIRTEEN!*

AND THE GREAT GAXTON IS NEXT! THE PHOTOGRAPH OF HIS *ACTUAL DEATH SCENE* SHOULD ENHANCE MY ALBUM NICELY!

THE GREAT GAXTON DEFIES DEATH CROSS-ING BASS RIVER RAPIDS TUESDAY Come one, Come all!

AND THAT TUESDAY AT BASS RIVER RAPIDS...

YOU MUST BE CRAZY WANTING TO RISK YOUR NECK OUT ON THAT LEDGE, JUST TO GET A PICTURE OF GAXTON WHEN HE PUTS HIS FOOT ON THIS SIDE!

THAT'S A PHOTOGRAPHER'S JOB, OFFICER! I HAVE TO TAKE CHANCES!

Then, AS THE GREAT GAXTON STARTS HIS TREACHEROUS CROSSING...

HA, HA! FROM THIS POSITION THE CROWD CAN'T SEE MY HAND WHEN I CUT THE ROPE! COME ALONG, GAXTON... COME ALONG TO YOUR PICTURESQUE DEATH!

THE GREAT GAXTON REACHES MIDWAY ON THE TIGHTROPE! SUDDENLY...

NOW!

EXCELLENT! I'VE SNAPPED A PICTURE OF THE GREAT GAXTON IN HIS FALL TO DEATH! NO HUMAN COULD SURVIVE THOSE ROCKS AND RAPIDS BELOW!

LATER THE MAN OF EVIL DEVELOPS HIS FILM OF DEATH!

GAXTON'S BODY WAS LOST IN THE RAPIDS! I CAUGHT HIS BODY AT THE PRECISE MOMENT OF FALLING! A *PRIZE* PHOTOGRAPH! HA! I WONDER HOW THE DEMONS OF DEATH CAME OUT *THIS* TIME!

But AS ALEC MARSTON DEVELOPS HIS PRINT...

ONLY GAXTON HIMSELF COULD SEE ME CUT THE ROPE... *WHA...?* THE DEATH DEMONS... *THEY'RE NOT IN THE PICTURE!*

NO, MARSTON ...THE DEMONS OF THE GRAVE RE-LEASED ME!

GAXTON! I-IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! YOU'RE *DEAD!*

I TELL YOU... DEATH WOULD NOT ACCEPT ME-- THEY LET ME RETURN TO YOU-- THE MAN WHO ONLY I CAN PROVE TRIED TO KILL ME!

GO BACK! GO BACK! IT'S SOME SORT OF FIENDISH TRICK PLANNED BY THE DEATH DEMONS!

YOU WILL ADMIT YOUR GUILT... YOU WILL CONFESS TO KILLING OTHERS TO GAIN YOUR ASTOUNDING PICTURES OF DEATH!

NO, NO! YOU CAN'T TRICK ME!

SUDDENLY, AS ALEC MARSTON SEEK'S ESCAPE ON THE ROOF TOP...

WHA...? Y-YOU! YOU CAN'T FRIGHTEN ME! YOU'RE POWERLESS TO HARM ME! I KNOW ONLY THOSE ABOUT TO DIE NEED FEAR YOU! YOU CAN'T *FORCE* DEATH ON A MAN!

WE DO NOT FORCE DEATH ON ANY PERSON, MARSTON... *NOT UNTIL HIS TIME HAS COME!*

WE WERE *SUMMONED* TO BE NEAR YOU, MARSTON!

GO BACK TO THE RIVER, GAXTON! THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO SEEK VENGEANCE NOW... MARSTON'S DOOM AWAITS HIM!

I-I'M GOING TO DIE! M-MY TIME HAS COME...

H-HOW? HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO DIE? TELL ME...TELL ME, YOU FIENDS, SO THAT I CAN *PREVENT* IT!

NO ONE CAN SIDE-STEP DEATH ONCE IT HAS ARRIVED!

Y-YOU'RE LYING! THIS WAY IS SAFE...NO, *THAT* WAY!

WE ARE COMING, MARSTON! PREPARE YOURSELF!

GET BACK! GET BACK! I'LL OUTSMART YOU ALL!

SUDDENLY, A BRACE ON THE CAT-WALK SNAPS AND...

YIIIIIII!

I-IT'S MR. MARSTON! EEEEEEE!

DOWN, DOWN INTO HIS OWN STUDIO PLUNGES THE MAN OF MURDER!

ARRRGH!

And LATER, AS THE POLICE INVESTIGATE!

YOU SAY HE SEEMED TO BE RUNNING IN TERROR FROM SOMETHING THAT COULDN'T BE SEEN, MRS. MILLS!

Y-YES, SIR! HE WAS SCREAMING SOMETHING TERRIBLE! IT WAS AS IF HE HAD GONE COMPLETELY OUT OF HIS HEAD!

SAY, CHIEF, TAKE A LOOK AT THIS! MARSTON'S BODY MUST HAVE STRUCK THE CAMERA WHEN HE FELL THROUGH THE ROOF! IT SNAPPED A PICTURE OF *HIMSELF!*

LET'S SEE IT, COLLINS!

POOR DEVIL HAD BAD LUCK ALL AROUND! HIS BODY ALSO SMASHED A VIAL OF ACID THAT DESTROYED SOME SORT OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ALBUM HE WAS WORKING ON! STRANGE HOW HE SUDDENLY RUSHED ABOUT SCREAMING ACROSS THE ROOF... MAYBE HE SNAPPED FROM OVER-WORK!

COULD BE, CHIEF... COULD BE!

YES, PERHAPS THAT **WAS** THE SOLUTION TO ALEC MARSTON'S ACTIONS! PERHAPS THE EXPLOSION IN THE ATOM LABORATORY HAD MERELY MADE HIM IMAGINE HE SAW THE DEMONS OF DEATH --- PERHAPS!

HIS LAST CHOICE

WHEN A MAN IS CLOSE TO DEATH HIS THOUGHTS TURN TO HIS NEXT ABODE... NAMELY, IS HE GOING TO *HEAVEN OR HELL!* THIS IS THE TALE OF SUCH A MAN, SILAS KRANE... DYING... ALONE IN THE WORLD... HE TOO THOUGHT ABOUT... *HIS LAST CHOICE!*

TRAPANI
FINOCCHIARO

I'M AFRAID KRANE CAME TO US TOO LATE! THAT TUMOR HAS SPREAD TO THE DANGER POINT!

JUST DO YOUR BEST, DOCTOR ...A MAN CAN'T EXPECT ANYMORE!

WELL, HERE GOES... HE'S VERY CLOSE TO DEATH RIGHT NOW! I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN SAVE HIM!

TRY, TRY! WHILE THERE'S STILL LIFE, THERE'S HOPE!

BREATHE DEEPLY KRANE ...IN...OUT...IN...OUT... OH NO, IT LOOKS LIKE... YES, I'M AFRAID THAT THE DOCTOR WAS TOO LATE!!...

Mister Mystery #14, November 1953. Pencils: Sal Trapani; inks: S. Finocchiaro. Publisher: Stanley Morse.

YOU DIDN'T MAKE IT, KRANE... BUT IT ISN'T SO BAD, IS IT? ISN'T THIS WHAT YOU EXPECTED... WHAT YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD BE LIKE... BUT HOW WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE DEAD!

BUT WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE? THIS IS WHERE THE GREAT DECISION IS MADE... THIS IS WHERE THEY BALANCE YOUR LIFE AND DECIDE WHAT YOU DID WITH IT! THIS IS THE BOUNDARY LINE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, KRANE... AFRAID? WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO BE AFRAID OF... SURELY YOUR LIFE WAS ABOVE REPROACH... OR WAS IT?

THEY'VE MADE THEIR DECISION, KRANE... OR I SHOULD SAY YOU'VE MADE IT FOR THEM... THE WORDS AND DEEDS WERE SET DOWN BY YOU IN YOUR BOOK OF LIFE...

YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS, DON'T YOU? IT COULDN'T BE ANY OTHER... AND YOU CAN'T CHANGE IT NOW... YOU'RE TOO LATE! FEEL THAT HEAT... SMELL THAT SULPHUR... YOU'RE IN PURGATORY!

GREETINGS, SILAS KRANE, GREETINGS! I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU!

BUT... BUT I'VE BEEN A GOOD MAN! I DON'T BELONG HERE... I BELONG IN... IN HEAVEN!

THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAY, BUT I GUESS YOU'RE NO WORSE THAN THE REST OF THEM! HERE, LET ME READ SOMETHING OF YOUR LIFE... SELFISH... GREEDY... MISERLY ...THOUGHTLESS... DOMINATING... SEEKER OF POWER... NOT A VERY PRETTY PICTURE, IS IT?

COME, SILAS... LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT YOUR PUNISHMENT WILL BE. SINCE YOU ARE LIKE THE AVERAGE SINNER, YOU HAVE YOUR CHOICE! WE ARE VERY DEMOCRATIC DOWN HERE!

THESE ARE THE MEN WHO MUST SUPPLY OUR FUEL... NOT AN EASY JOB, BUT WE HAVE WORSE!

AND THESE ARE THE *FIRES OF HELL!* SURELY YOU'VE HEARD OF THEM, HAVEN'T YOU? WELL, WHICH SHALL IT BE... THE PITS OR THE FURNACES?

BUT... BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN A REALLY BAD MAN... CAN'T WE MAKE SOME KIND OF A DEAL... A BARGAIN!

YOU WOULD BARGAIN WITH ME! FOOL! COME, LET ME SHOW YOU THOSE WHO HAVE DEALT WITH *THE DEVIL!*

THESE ARE THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO WOULD DEAL WITH ME... *DOOMED FOREVER TO WALK THE FIRES OF PURGATORY!* IS THAT WHAT YOU DESIRE?

NO... NO... ANYTHING... ANYTHING BUT THAT!

WELL, I'VE GIVEN YOU MORE TIME THAN I THOUGHT...I'VE MADE UP MY MIND...TO THE FURNACES!

NO! NOT THAT! I COULDN'T TAKE IT...YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, SILAS, COULDN'T YOU TAKE IT? YOU'VE MADE YOUR BED, NOW LIE IN IT!

TAKE HIM AWAY!

WHAT HAPPENED? THIS ISN'T HELL...THIS IS THE NETHER-NETHER LAND IN BETWEEN...THE PLACE WHERE MAN IS BOTH DEAD AND ALIVE!

LOOK, HE'S COMING OUT OF IT!

WHAT...WHAT HAPPENED! WHERE AM I?

YOU'RE GOING TO BE ALRIGHT, MR. KRANE! WE THOUGHT WE HAD LOST YOU THERE! BUT YOU PULLED THROUGH! FOR A WHILE WE EVEN FIGURED YOU WERE DEAD!

YOU FIGURED CORRECTLY... I WAS!

WHAT WAS THIS ALL ABOUT? JUST MY WAY OF SAYING THAT THERE'S A LITTLE BIT OF ***THE DEVIL*** IN ALL OF US... NO MAN IS PERFECT, EACH IN HIS OWN WAY HAS SOME EVIL IN HIS SOUL. WE MAKE OUR OWN HELLS AND OUR OWN HEAVENS...OUR DESTINIES ARE SHAPED BY OUR OWN HANDS. IN THE FINAL JUDGEMENT, ***THIS IS YOUR LAST CHOICE***... DO WITH IT WHAT YOU WILL!

THE END

DOLLS OF DOOM

VOODOO---DOWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES, THAT WORD HAS BROUGHT UNSURPASSED TERROR TO THE HEART OF COUNTLESS THOUSANDS THROUGHOUT THE WEST INDIES AND AMERICA! FOR THE SATANICAL MAGIC OF VOODOOISM COULD **KILL**, EITHER SLOWLY OR SUDDENLY, BUT ALWAYS AGONIZINGLY! AND ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE VOODOO WITCHES ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN WIPED OUT IN THIS MODERN DAY AND AGE, WHO KNOWS WHAT GHOULISH RITES OF SORCERY AND DEMONOLOGY ARE STILL BEING PRACTICED IN THE ISOLATED REGIONS OF THE WORLD!

DEEP WITHIN THE EERIE, FORBIDDING SWAMPS OF LOUISIANA'S BAYOU COUNTRY---

THAT MUST BE THE PLACE ---THE HOVEL WHERE THE NATIVES SAID *ZAMBARTA* STILL LIVES ON!

YOU---*YOU* MUST BE ZAMBARTA---*THE VOODOO WITCH!* NO ONE ELSE COULD LOOK SO INCREDIBLY OLD---OR SO *EVIL!*

AH, YOU KNOW MY NAME! BUT I DON'T GET MANY VISITORS THESE DAYS ---WHO ARE *YOU*?

Adventures Into The Unknown #27, January 1952. Art: George Wilhelms. Publisher: ACG.

I'VE KNOWN YOUR NAME EVER SINCE MY CHILDHOOD, ZAMBARTA! I'M *FLOYD SARTORIS*, OF THE SARTORIS PLANTATION IN UPPER LOUISIANA—AND I STILL REMEMBER HOW MY GOVERNESSES USED TO SCARE ME INTO BEHAVING BY SAYING THAT ZAMBARTA, THE DREAD VOODOO WOMAN, WOULD COME AND GET ME UNLESS I WERE A GOOD BOY!

HEH, HEH—FIFTY AND A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, WHEN MY MAGICAL POWERS WERE AT THEIR HEIGHT, IT WAS THE *GROWN-UPS* WHO WERE TERRIFIED OF ME!

THOSE WERE THE GOOD OLD DAYS WHEN MY VOODOO MAGIC KILLED *HUNDREDS* IN NEW ORLEANS ALONE! THE POLICE COULD NEVER LEGALLY PROVE THAT I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CRIME WAVES—BUT WHEN THE PUBLIC OUTCRY AGAINST ME REACHED A CLIMAX, I WAS FORCED TO FLEE AND HIDE HERE IN THE BAYOUS! BUT THAT WAS FULLY FIFTY YEARS AGO—AND SINCE THEN, ONLY A FEW BELIEVERS HAVE SOUGHT ME OUT TO PURCHASE MY MAGIC FOR THEIR EVIL ENDS!

YES, SINCE THEN MY FAME HAS TURNED INTO FICTION, MY NAME INTO A LEGEND! PEOPLE TODAY MOCK AT VOODOOISM AND CALL IT STUPID SUPERSTITION—SO WHY HAVE *YOU* SOUGHT ME OUT, FLOYD SARTORIS?

BECAUSE I AM ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING BELIEVERS IN VOODOO MAGIC, O ZAMBARTA! I AM A DABBLER IN THE OCCULT—I HAVE ROAMED THE WORLD, FRUITLESSLY SEEKING THE SECRETS OF SORCERY THAT WOULD GIVE ME WEALTH AND POWER! I TRIED TO LEARN THE RITES OF VOODOO IN HAITI—BUT THERE I WAS TOLD THAT THE ONLY GREAT MASTER OF VOODOO, *ZAMBARTA*, HAD LEFT THE ISLAND FOR THE NEW WORLD OVER A CENTURY AGO!

THWARTED IN MY SEARCH FOR POWER, I RETURNED TO THE SARTORIS PLANTATION—ONLY TO FIND THAT MY FATHER HAD DIED, AND THAT HE HAD DISINHERITED ME BECAUSE I HAD NEVER STAYED HOME TO TEND TO THE PLANTATION THE WAY MY BROTHER, ANDREW, HAD DONE! AND WHEN I LEARNED THAT THE FABULOUSLY PROFITABLE PLANTATION HAD BEEN LEFT TO ANDREW AND HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER, I KNEW THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO *DIE*—THAT ALL THE WEALTH HAD TO BE *MINE!*

BUT I KNEW I HAD TO KILL THEM WITHOUT AROUSING THE SUSPICIONS OF THE POLICE! IT WAS THEN THAT I RECALLED THE LEGENDS OF *YOUR* BLACK MAGIC, ZAMBARTA—AND I KNEW THAT *YOU* WERE THE ANSWER! FOR WEEKS I QUESTIONED THE FEARFUL BAYOU NATIVES—BUT AT LAST THEIR DIRECTIONS LED ME TO YOU! AND I'LL PAY YOU WELL FOR THE MAGIC THAT WILL HELP ME GET THE PLANTATION AND ITS FORTUNE!

HA—I HAVE JUST THE THING FOR YOU—A *VOODOO CHAMBA DOLL!*

FIRST, THE POSSESSOR OF THIS DOLL HAS TO WORK HIMSELF UP TO THE PROPER DEGREE OF HATRED FOR HIS ENEMY! THEN, WHEN THE *DEATH-WISH* IS AT ITS HEIGHT, FLINGING THE DOLL INTO A FIRE WILL INSTANTLY SUMMON UP A *FIENDISH DEMON FROM THE UNKNOWN*—WHO WILL SLAY THE ENEMY! THE DOLL IS *YOURS*, FOR MY USUAL PRICE—$100,000!

HMM, THE PLANTATION IS WORTH OVER A MILLION--- I'LL PAY YOU AS SOON AS I GET RID OF MY BROTHER AND HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER! BUT FOR THAT, I'LL NEED ***THREE*** DOLLS---LET ME HAVE THE OTHER TWO ON THAT SHELF BEHIND YOU!

NO! IT TAKES 20 YEARS TO PERFORM THE INTRICATE MAGICAL RITES NECESSARY FOR THE PRODUCTION OF EACH DOLL---AND I'M KEEPING THE OTHERS TO USE AGAINST ***YOU*** IN CASE YOU DON'T PAY ME! YOU'LL HAVE TO MANAGE WITH ONE DOLL--- YOU CAN ALWAYS KILL THE WIFE AND DAUGHTER YOURSELF!

I WON'T RISK KILLING THEM AND GETTING CAUGHT---BUT THERE'S NO RISK IN KILLING ***YOU*** FOR THOSE THREE DOLLS! WE'RE A HUNDRED MILES FROM NOWHERE---NO ONE WILL HEAR THE SHOTS!

FOOL---DIDN'T YOUR DABBLINGS IN THE OCCULT TEACH YOU THAT ***NO ORDINARY BULLET*** CAN KILL A VOODOO WITCH?

SURE--- I KNEW THAT A VOODOO WITCH CAN LIVE FOREVER---UNLESS ***SILVER*** PIERCES HER HEART! AND THAT'S WHY I CAME ARMED WITH ***SILVER BULLETS***---JUST IN CASE YOU TURNED OUT TO BE OBSTINATE!

YAAGHHH!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

HA, ALL THREE OUANGA DOLLS ARE MINE NOW ---AND SOON THE ***SARTORIS PLANTATION*** WILL BE ALL MINE!

TWO DAYS LATER, AT THE SARTORIS PLANTATION---

YES, ANDY---DAD'S DEATH HAS MADE ME SEE THE LIGHT! IF I'D STAYED HERE AND HELPED HIM WITH THE BURDEN OF MANAGING THE PLANTATION, PERHAPS HE'D HAVE LIVED A FEW YEARS LONGER! SO FROM NOW ON, I'D LIKE TO STAY HOME AND HELP OUT---IF YOU'RE WILLING TO HAVE ME!

OF COURSE, FLOYD ---I'M ***DELIGHTED*** TO HAVE MY WANDERING BROTHER BACK AGAIN!

I DON'T ***LIKE*** UNCLE FLOYD---HE DIDN'T BRING ME ANY PRESENT!

WHY, MADGE---HOW ***COULD*** YOU SAY A THING LIKE THAT?

I'LL MAKE UP FOR IT, MADGE---I PROMISE TO GIVE YOU A ***BIG SURPRISE*** SOME DAY SOON!

LATER THAT DAY...

ALL THREE OF THEM HAVE GONE OUT TO GIVE MADGE A HORSEBACK-RIDING LESSON--- NOW'S MY CHANCE TO SNEAK DOWN TO THE FIREPLACE AND THROW THE FIRST DOLL INTO THE FLAMES! I'LL START WITH *ANDREW*---IT'LL BE EASY TO WORK UP TO THE PROPER DEGREE OF HATRED AGAINST *HIM*! ALL I HAVE TO DO IS THINK OF HOW HE'S KEEP-ING ME FROM A *FORTUNE*!

I *HATE* MY BROTHER, ANDREW! HE WAS ALWAYS THE FAVORITE SON, ALWAYS GETTING THE ATTENTION THAT I WANTED! AND NOW HE'S GOTTEN THE PLANTATION AND THE FORTUNE THAT I WANTED---AND I *HATE* HIM WITH EVERY FIBRE OF MY BODY!

YES, I *HATE* HIM. --AND I WISH HE WERE *DEAD*!

AN INSTANT LATER, ON THE ROAD OUTSIDE THE SARTORIS MANSION---

MOMMY--- DADDY--- L---*LOOK*!

GREAT SCOTT --THAT--THAT *THING* SUDDENLY APPEARED FROM OUT OF NOWHERE!

OHHH!

ANDREW!

HELP!

AS THE PANIC-STRICKEN HORSES FLEE IN UNCONTROLLABLE TERROR FROM THE AWFUL DENIZEN OF THE UNKNOWN---

YARGHHHH!

SMASH!

LATER...

SOB!...IT...IT WAS **HORRIBLE**, INSPECTOR! I SAW THAT MONSTER HURL MY HUSBAND TO HIS DEATH ...SOB!...AND THEN IT...IT JUST **DISAPPEARED!**

NOW, NOW, JUNE...TRY TO GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF!

WE'LL HAVE TO DISREGARD HER STORY...SHE'S OBVIOUSLY **HYSTERICAL!**

NO, IT **WAS** A MONSTER WHO KILLED DADDY!... AND IT'S ALL MY **UNCLE FLOYD'S** FAULT...I JUST **KNOW** IT IS! NOTHING LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENED BEFORE **HE** CAME!

SHE'S RAVING DELIRIOUSLY, TOO, INSPECTOR! I'LL HIRE A NURSE FOR BOTH OF THEM TONIGHT!

GOOD IDEA! I'LL REPORT THE DEATH AS DUE TO CAUSES **UNKNOWN!**

LATE THAT NIGHT...

IT WAS A STROKE OF GENIUS TO HIRE A NURSE AND ORDER HER TO SIT OUTSIDE JUNE'S ROOM! WHEN THE DEMON STRIKES AGAIN, THE NURSE WILL SWEAR THAT I WASN'T EVEN NEAR THE ROOM...AND I'LL HAVE A PERFECT ALIBI! NOW TO USE THE **SECOND** DOLL--AGAINST **JUNE!**

OOOO

I **HATE** MY SISTER-IN-LAW, JUNE...SHE'S KEEPING ME FROM THE SARTORIS FORTUNE THAT'S RIGHTFULLY **MINE!** I **HATE** HER...AND I WISH SHE WERE **DEAD!**

HELP!

MERCIFUL HEAVENS!

OHHHH!

MOMMY ---MOMMY!

YES, I--- I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES! AFTER THAT---THAT MONSTER STRANGLED HER, IT DROPPED HER--- AND DISAPPEARED!

YOU'D BETTER GO PHONE THE POLICE--- WHILE I TRY TO CALM MADGE DOWN!

YOU KILLED MY MOMMY! I HEARD YOU SAY YOU HATED HER AND WISHED SHE WAS DEAD, AND I SAW YOU THROW SOMETHING IN THE FIRE --- SOMETHING THAT MUST'VE CALLED UP THE MONSTER! AND I--- I'M GONNA TELL THE POLICE ALL ABOUT IT!

WHY, YOU LITTLE BRAT---!

I'LL KILL YOU IF YOU BREATHE A WORD OF THAT TO ANYONE! PROMISE YOU'LL KEEP IT A SECRET--- OR I'LL---!

OWWW--- I--- I PROMISE!

AN HOUR LATER---

HMM, AND YOU SAY NO ONE ELSE WAS EVEN NEAR MRS. SARTORIS' ROOM WHILE YOU WERE ON DUTY, NURSE? THAT LEAVES US WITH A SUPERNATURAL ASSAILANT THAT CAN APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR AT WILL! AND I'VE HAD ENOUGH CONTACT WITH LOUISIANA VOODOO CASES TO KNOW THAT SUPERNATURAL DEMONS DO EXIST!

I--- I'VE GOT TO TELL THE POLICE--- EVEN IF I DIE FOR IT!

HE'S THE ONE WHO CALLED UP THE DEMON! I HEARD HIM SAY HE HATED MY MOMMY AND WISHED SHE WAS DEAD, AND THEN HE THREW SOMETHING IN THE FIRE--- JUST BEFORE MY MOMMY SCREAMED!

ER--- THE POOR CHILD'S OUT OF HER MIND! LOSING HER PARENTS IN SUCH QUICK SUCCESSION HAS PRODUCED A PSYCHOSIS--- SHE'S BEEN SEEING AND HEARING THINGS!

MMM, MAYBE THE KID WAS SEEING AND HEARING THINGS--- THINGS THAT REALLY HAPPENED! YOU HAD A MOTIVE IN WANTING TO GET RID OF YOUR BROTHER'S FAMILY--- BECAUSE THE PLANTATION REVERTS TO YOU AFTER THEIR DEATHS! AND YOU WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST MAN IN LOUISIANA TO USE VOODOO WITCHCRAFT IN COMMITTING MURDER! HIGGINS--- SEARCH THIS GUY'S ROOM, AND BRING OUT ANYTHING THAT LOOKS STRANGE OR SUSPICIOUS!

TEN MINUTES LATER---

THIS WAS THE ONLY STRANGE THING I COULD FIND, INSPECTOR --- IT WAS HIDDEN IN THE BOTTOM OF HIS SUITCASE! HAW--- IMAGINE A GROWN MAN PLAYING WITH DOLLS!

ER--- THAT'S JUST A--- A PRESENT I BOUGHT FOR MADGE! I--- I GUESS I FORGOT TO GIVE IT TO HER BEFORE!

WELL, IF THIS IS YOURS, KID--- HERE IT IS!

YOU---YOU TOOK MY DADDY AND MOMMY AWAY---AND NOW YOU THINK A **DOLL** WILL MAKE UP FOR IT! WELL, IT **WON'T**---!

WAIT---LET ME SEE THAT DOLL!

I DON'T **WANT** YOUR DOLL! I **HATE** YOU--- I---WISH YOU WERE **DEAD!**

STOP--- **DON'T**---!

THE--- THE **DEMON!** SHE THREW THE DOLL INTO THE FIRE WHEN SHE HAD THE DEATH WISH AGAINST **ME**---I--- I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY!

YAAGHKH!

IT **KILLED** HIM! SHOOT IT DOWN---QUICK!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

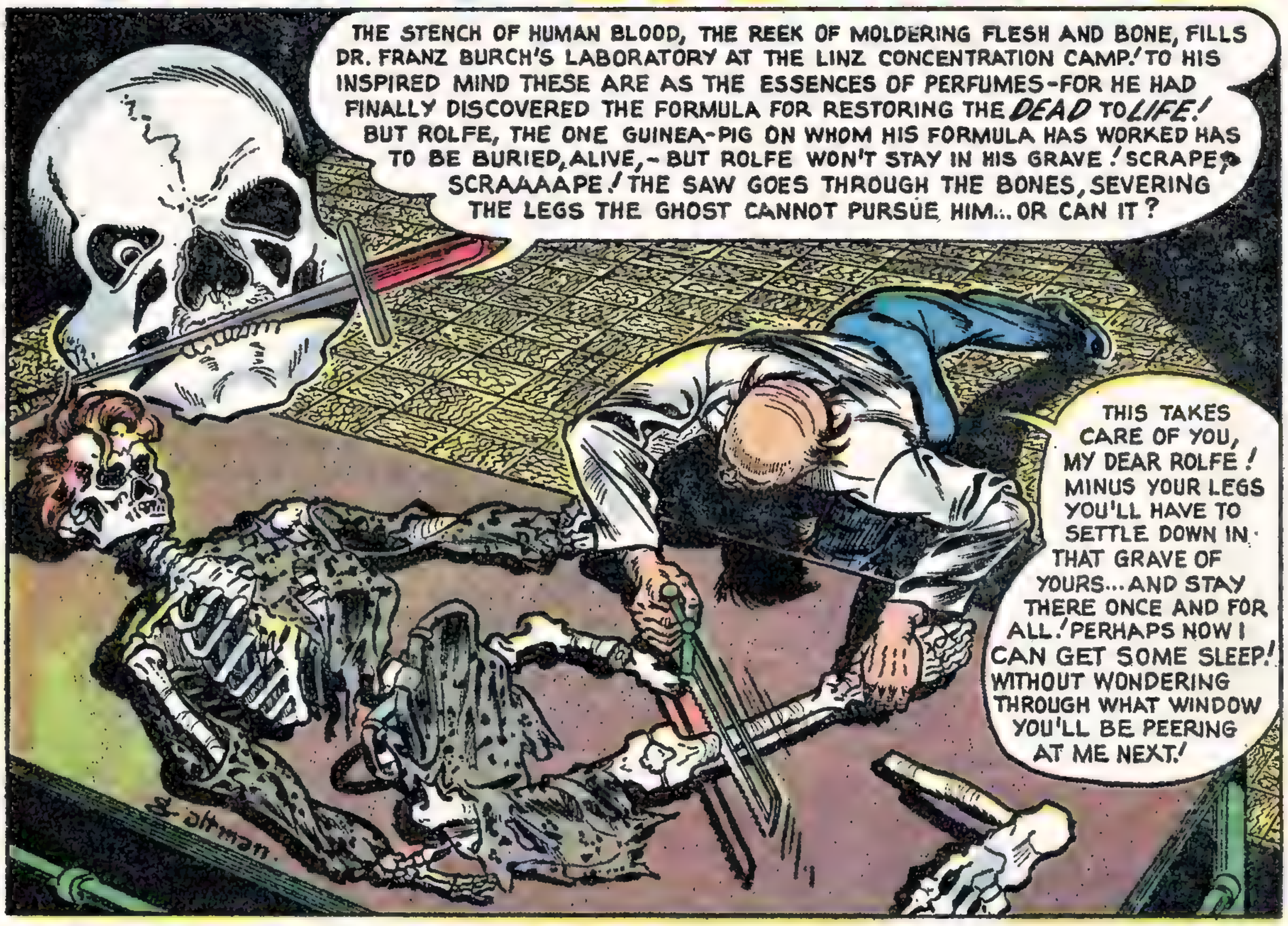
HUH? IT---IT **DISAPPEARED!**

IT'S JUST AS WELL--- NOW THAT THE **REAL** KILLER IS DEAD! YOUR UNCLE **DID** SUMMON UP THE DEMON, MADGE---BUT **YOU** PAID HIM BACK FOR HIS CRIME! AND NOW I THINK I'LL GET MYSELF APPOINTED AS YOUR GUARDIAN ---AND SEE THAT YOU'RE SHIELDED FROM HORROR LIKE THIS FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!

THE END!

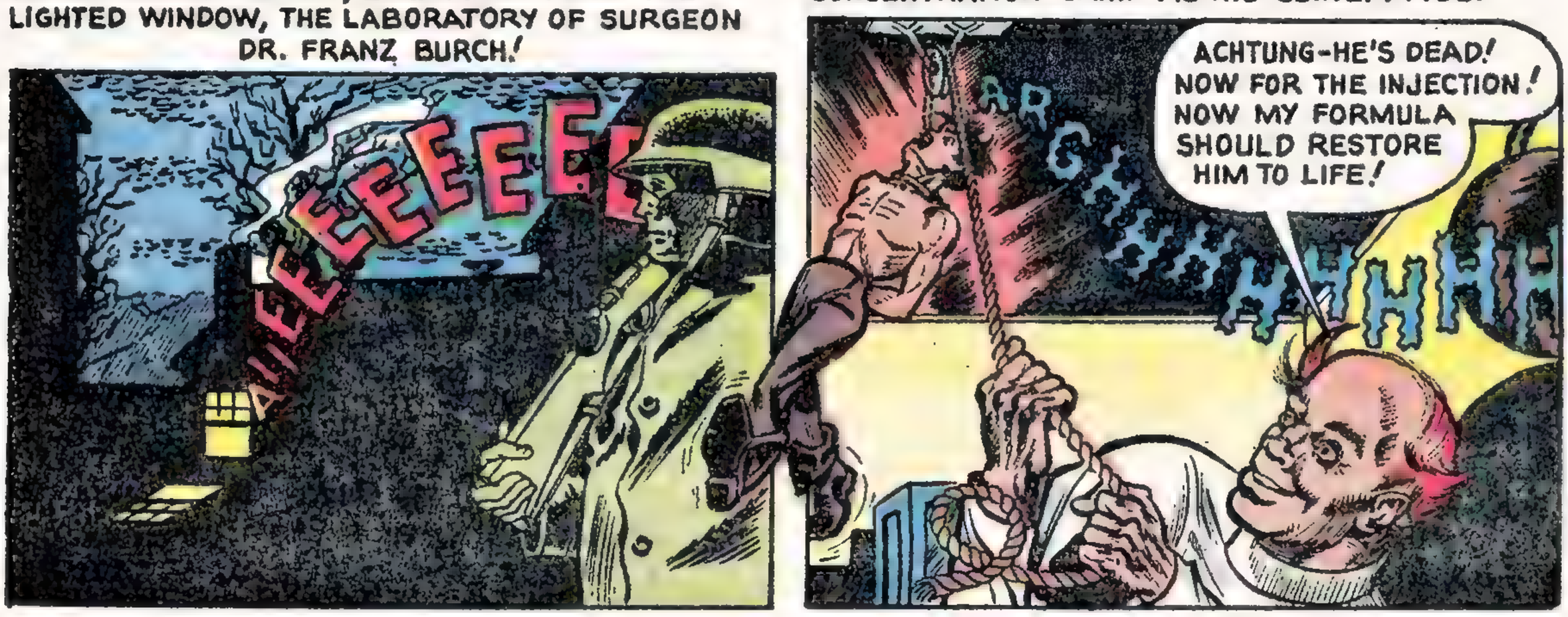
WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT, MY VORACIOUS READERS - HA HA HA! I'M HYSTERICAL JUST THINKING ABOUT IT - A MURDERED CORPSE, DOWN TO HIS LAST LEGS, JUST A BONY, SKELETAL, COLLECTION OF CLANKING VERTEBRAE, LOSES THOSE LEGS - BUT CONTINUES TO WALK THE EARTH CREATING THE...

TERROR OF THE STOLEN LEGS


THE STENCH OF HUMAN BLOOD, THE REEK OF MOLDERING FLESH AND BONE, FILLS DR. FRANZ BURCH'S LABORATORY AT THE LINZ CONCENTRATION CAMP! TO HIS INSPIRED MIND THESE ARE AS THE ESSENCES OF PERFUMES - FOR HE HAD FINALLY DISCOVERED THE FORMULA FOR RESTORING THE DEAD TO LIFE! BUT ROLFE, THE ONE GUINEA-PIG ON WHOM HIS FORMULA HAS WORKED HAS TO BE BURIED, ALIVE, - BUT ROLFE WON'T STAY IN HIS GRAVE! SCRAPE, SCRAAAAPE! THE SAW GOES THROUGH THE BONES, SEVERING THE LEGS THE GHOST CANNOT PURSUE HIM... OR CAN IT?
THIS TAKES CARE OF YOU, MY DEAR ROLFE! MINUS YOUR LEGS YOU'LL HAVE TO SETTLE DOWN IN THAT GRAVE OF YOURS... AND STAY THERE ONCE AND FOR ALL! PERHAPS NOW I CAN GET SOME SLEEP! WITHOUT WONDERING THROUGH WHAT WINDOW YOU'LL BE PEERING AT ME NEXT!
L. Altman

DARK NIGHT - THIN, COLD MOONLIGHT - SETTLES ON THE NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMP AT LINZ! A WHISTLING WIND BREAKS THE AWFUL STILLNESS AND THE TREAD OF THE ARMED GUARD! THEN A PIERCING SHRIEK RENDS THE AIR, EMENATING FROM THE LIGHTED WINDOW, THE LABORATORY OF SURGEON DR. FRANZ BURCH!

A LOUD SHRIEK... AND ONCE MORE, STILLNESS! THE RATTLE OF DEATH IS OVER! DR. BURCH, BRILLIANT NAZI SCIENTIST, IS EXPERIMENTING WITH LIFE AND DEATH, WITH THE LIVING INMATES OF THE LINZ CONCENTRATION CAMP AS HIS GUINEA-PIGS!



Dark Mysteries #18, June 1954. Art: Gerald Altman. Publisher: Master Comics.

AN ANGRY CURSE BREAKS FROM THE COMPRESSED LIPS OF DR. BURCH! THE FORMULA FAILED TO WORK FOR THE TENTH TIME!

SCHWEINERAI! THEY SEND ME SPECIMENS HALF DEAD TO BEGIN WITH! THEY LACK VITALITY TO RESPOND TO THE SERUM!

NO PITY, ONLY DISGUST - FILLS THE EYES OF BURCH INSPECTING THE STILL LIVING PROSPECTIVE VICTIMS FOR HIS EXPERIMENTS!

PAH! AREN'T THERE ANY ROBUST, HEALTHY SPECIMENS FOR ME, COMMANDER PAULUS?

RATIONS ARE LIMITED FOR PRISONERS, AND THEY DO HARD LABOR!

TEA TIME IN THE COMMANDANTS PARLOR!

I AM ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE GREATEST SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY! I MUST HAVE HARDY SPECIMENS TO WORK ON! WHEN I PUT THEM TO DEATH, WOUNDED, I INJECT THEM WITH MY SERUM I CAN *BRING THEM BACK TO LIFE*, HEALED! GIVE ME ONE REALLY HEALTHY MAN AS HEALTHY AS OUR SOLDIERS!

BUT MY ORDERS ARE WE MUST USE THE MEN I SEND!

THIS, HERR DOCTOR, IS THE APPLE OF MY EYE...MY MARGARET!

NOW, NOW, FATHER!

I CAN HARDLY BLAME YOU, SIR! I COULD DOTE ON HER MYSELF!

BURCH KEEPS HIS NERVES UNDER CONTROL WHEN HE CALLS ON COMMANDANT PAULUS! ONLY ONE THING IS AS IMPORTANT TO HIM AS HIS FORMULA... THE COMMANDANT'S DAUGHTER, MARGARET!

THAT DUMKOPF, THE COMMANDANT! SUCH STUPIDITY! SENDING ME THE WEAKEST PRISONERS FOR MY EXPERIMENTS

TAKE ME TO THE BARRACKS, COMMANDANT! I WANT TO LOOK OVER THE INMATES!

THEY'RE ALL IN A LOW PHYSICAL STATE, DOCTOR!

HIS EYES GLEAM WITH STRANGE FIRE, HIS LONG, DELICATE FINGERS TWITCH WITH NERVOUS IMPATIENCE, AS DR. BURCH TALKS OF HIS GREAT DISCOVERY! UNTIL MARGARET PAULUS ENTERS....

THE WORLD WILL KNEEL BEFORE OUR ARMIES WHEN... OH, MISS MARGARET, YOU LOOK LOVELY!

HOW DO YOU DO, DR. BURCH? HELLO, FATHER!

LIEBCHEN!

A DISCREET COUGH INTERRUPTS THIS PLEASANT SCENE...

>COUGH!

I BROUGHT THE LIST YOU WANTED, SIR!

ROLFE'S A MODEL PRISONER, THE BEST TRUSTEE WE'VE EVER HAD!

THAT ROLFE... HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A PRISONER!

HE'S A POLITICAL RENEGADE! INTELLIGENT MAN-ER-I MEAN, HE'S MISGUIDED, BUT HE'S GOT BRAINS! HE'S USEFUL IN MY HOUSE!

DESPITE BURCH'S PASSION FOR MARGARET, HE GETS SMALL ENCOURAGEMENT!

WHEN WILL YOU HAVE DINNER WITH ME, MARGARET? ANY EVENING YOU SAY...

SORRY, FRANZ, I'M BUSY THESE DAYS... PERHAPS SOMETIME...

BURCH LEAVES MARGARET, UNABLE TO ADMIT THAT HE IS BEING REBUFFED! AN EGOIST, HE FINDS OTHER EXCUSES...

MARGARET IS SO YOUNG, SO SHY... SHE CAN'T BELIEVE THAT I, DR. BURCH, AM IN LOVE WITH HER! I'LL HAVE TO CONVINCE HER...

IN HIS LABORATORY, BURCH FINDS TWO SPECIMENS AWAITING HIM... AND HE SETS TO WORK, THROWING OFF HIS FANTASIES OF MARGARET!

READY, DOCTOR, FOR THE NEEDLE! I'VE JUST SEVERED THE WRIST... HE'S DYING!

PAH! THIS ONE WON'T RESPOND! TOO WEAK... LET'S TRY YOURS...

I'LL HAVE TO CRACK DOWN ON PAULUS! HE MUST SEND ME ROBUST SPECIMENS! I'LL WALK OVER TO HIS HOUSE...

YES, SIR!

PUTRID ODORS CLING TO BURCH-EVEN WHILE A WIND BLOWS! HE CANNOT WALK OFF HIS TWO FRUSTRATIONS... HIS SCIENTIFIC FAILURE AND HIS ROMANTIC ONE-MARGARET!

JUST ONE HEALTHY SPECIMEN AND I'LL STARTLE THE WHOLE WORLD! THEN MARGARET WILL BE EAGER TO MARRY ME...

VOICES... SOFT, WHISPERING, SECRET... PENETRATE THROUGH BURCH'S DREAMS...

SOUNDS LIKE-MARGARET! THIS IS HER HOUSE-I MUST SEE...

THE SCENE CONFRONTING THE IMPORTANT NAZI SCIENTIST SHATTERS HIS ENTIRE BEING... MAKING HIM QUIVER FROM HEAD TO FOOT... MARGARET AND THE PRISONER... ROLFE!

I'LL FIND A WAY TO SAVE YOU, MY DARLING! I LOVE YOU SO...

IT'S DANGEROUS FOR YOU, SWEET!

THE SILLY FOOL! PREFERRING HIM TO... *ME!* NOW I KNOW WHY PAULUS PROTECTS HIM!

THE NEXT DAY THE AGILE MIND OF BURCH IS QUICK TO FIND A WAY TO HANDLE THE IMPASSE... AND HE SENT FOR PAULUS!

THANK YOU FOR COMING TO MY LABORATORY, COMMANDANT! YOU MUST BELIEVE IT IS URGENT!

CERTAINLY, CERTAINLY, HERR DOCTOR! I AM GLAD TO COME...

THERE IS ONE PRISONER WHO IS IDEAL FOR MY EXPERIMENT! I MUST HAVE HIM AT ONCE!

GLADLY, GLADLY, HERR DOCTOR! WHICH ONE!

WITH SINISTER RELISH, BURCH SLOWLY ENUNCIATED THE PRISONER'S NAME TO THE SHOCKED COMMANDANT...

R-O-L-F-E!

YOU'RE-NOT SERIOUS? WHY-HE'S-TO-BE-PARDONED!

PLAYING HIS TRUMP CARD, BURCH PASSES OFFICIAL ORDERS FROM THE HOME OFFICE TO THE TREMBLING COMMANDANT!

DO YOU STILL WISH TO ARGUE, PAULUS?

ACH-NO, NO! BUT, PLEASE, DO ME A FAVOR! NOT A WORD TO MARGARET! I-I THINK SHE LIKES HIM! FEELS SORRY FOR THE FELLOW!

PERHAPS THE KEENEST SATISFACTION COMES TO BURCH WHEN THE DEFIANT, HANDSOME ROLFE IS BROUGHT BEFORE HIM-IN CHAINS

WHAT DO YOU WANT OF ME?

YOU ARE THE LUCKIEST MAN IN THE WORLD! I'VE SELECTED *YOU* TO TEST MY SERUM FOR RESTORING YOU TO LIFE-*AFTER DEATH!* YOU WILL BE A HERO!

YOU'RE INSANE... YOU'RE NOT HUMAN... *ARRRRRGHH...*

STEP ASIDE, HANS... I'M READY WITH THE NEEDLE...

GENTLEMEN, THIS PRISONER IS NOW DEAD!

YES, HE WANTED THIS MAN DEAD...BUT NOW A WILD ELATION COURSES THROUGH BURCH AS THE DEAD PULSE FEEBLY STARTS UP AGAIN AGAINST HIS FINGERS! IT WORKS! BUT- ROLFE MUST NOT LIVE! HE WOULD TAKE MARGARET AWAY... SO HE LIED...

I'VE DONE IT! HANS, GET SOME MEN TO TAKE AWAY THE BODY- IT STILL HASN'T WORKED!

BEFORE ROLFE CAN REACH CONSCIOUSNESS, HE MUST BE BURIED! BURCH ORDERS THE DIGGERS TO HURRY, HURRY...

DIG FASTER... DUMP THE BODY IN!

WELL, I'M RID OF HIM! AND AT LAST MY SERUM IS A SUCCESS! AS SOON AS I GET ANOTHER SPECIMEN I'LL SHOW THE ENTIRE WORLD!

THE FIELD IS NOW CLEAR FOR BURCH- AND HE HURRIES TO MARGARET...

MARGARET, I HEARD YOU HAD BEFRIENDED ROLFE! TERRIBLE ABOUT HIS SUICIDE! I WANTED TO TELL YOU HOW SORRY...

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, DR. B- I MEAN, FRANZ! YOU'RE SO KIND TO CALL!

THE NEXT FEW WEEKS ARE BUSY, HAPPY ONES FOR BURCH / MARGARET IS KINDER... AND SOME NEW SPECIMENS ARE BEING BUILT UP FOR HIS EXPERIMENT... BUT ONE NIGHT HE IS AWAKENED BY A QUEER SOUND- AT THE WINDOW...

WHO'S THERE? WHAT- IS-THAT? A-SK-SKELETON! I MUST BE DREAMING!

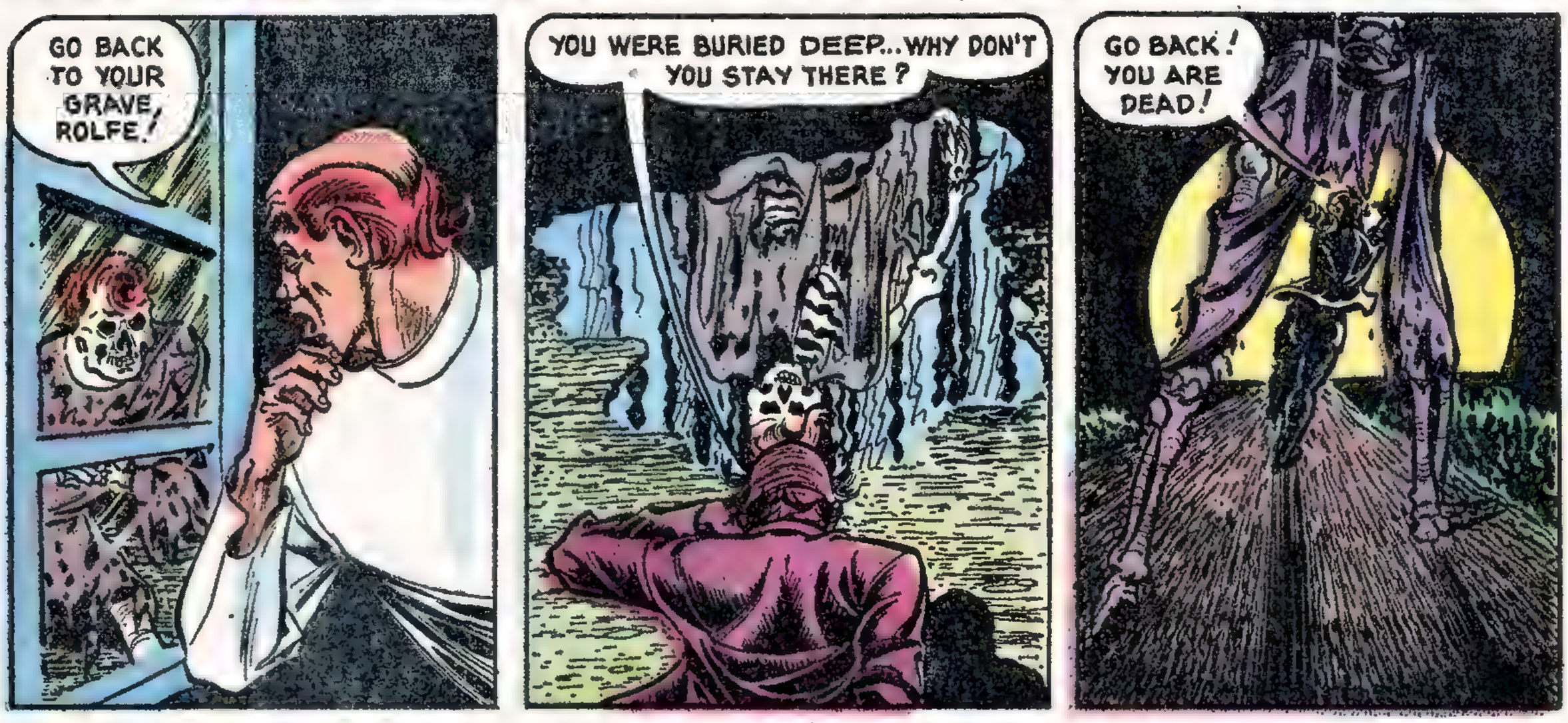
TAP TAP TAP

AND AT THE LONELY GRAVE NEAR THE WILLOW, THE NEXT NIGHT AGAIN THE EARTH STIRS... BONY LIMBS PROTRUDE!

AGAIN THE CLANKING BONES STIFFLY WEND THEIR WAY TOWARD DR. BURCH'S LIGHTED OFFICE WINDOW AS HE SITS IN HIS LABORATORY LISTENING... LISTENING TO THE UNWORLDLY SOUND...

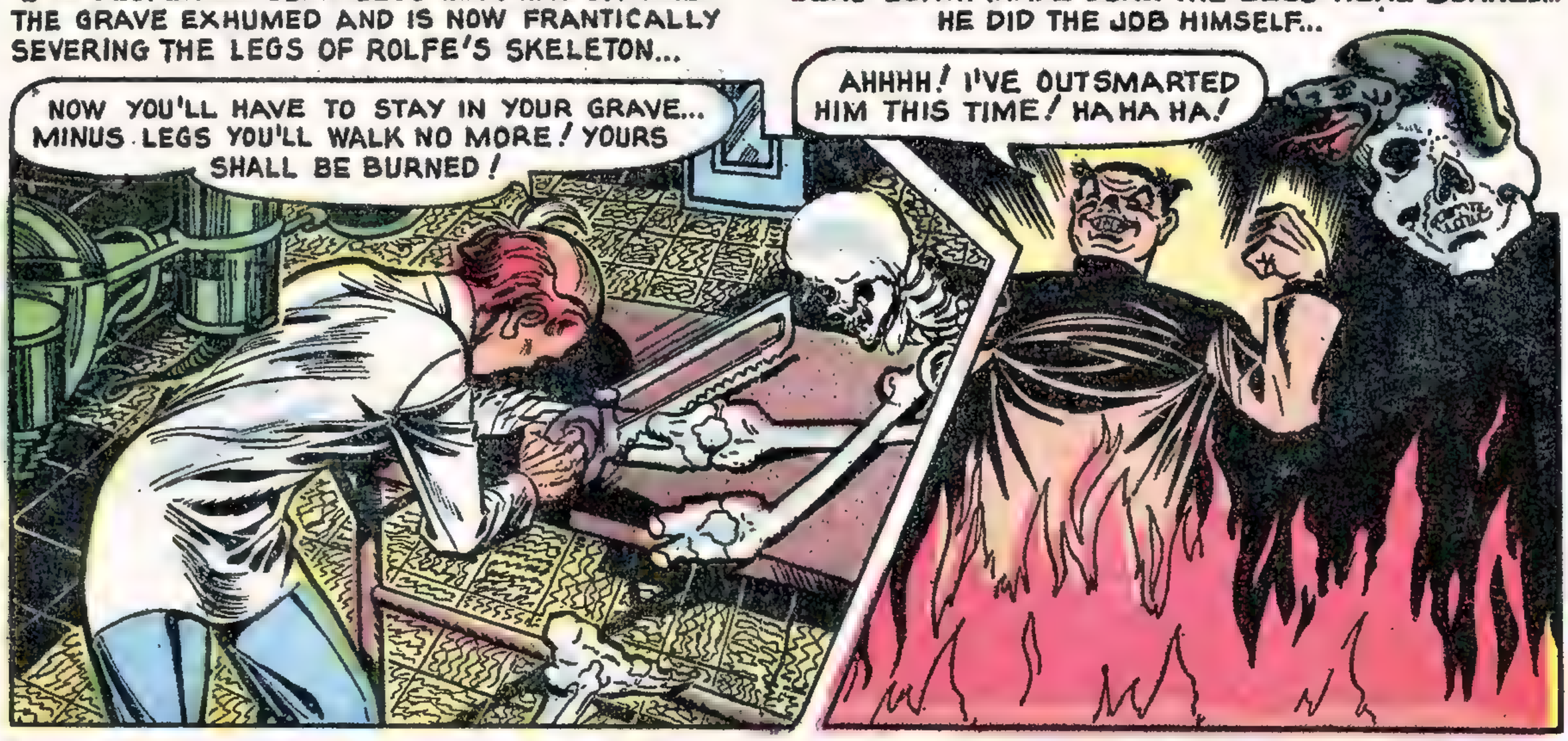
CLINK CLANK

EVERY NIGHT, FROM THEN ON, BURCH RECEIVES A GHOSTLY VISITATION FROM THE WALKING SKELETON! NO MORE CAN HE SPEND THE EVENING HOURS AT HIS WORK, NOR CAN HE SLEEP, NO MORE CAN HE FIND PEACE!

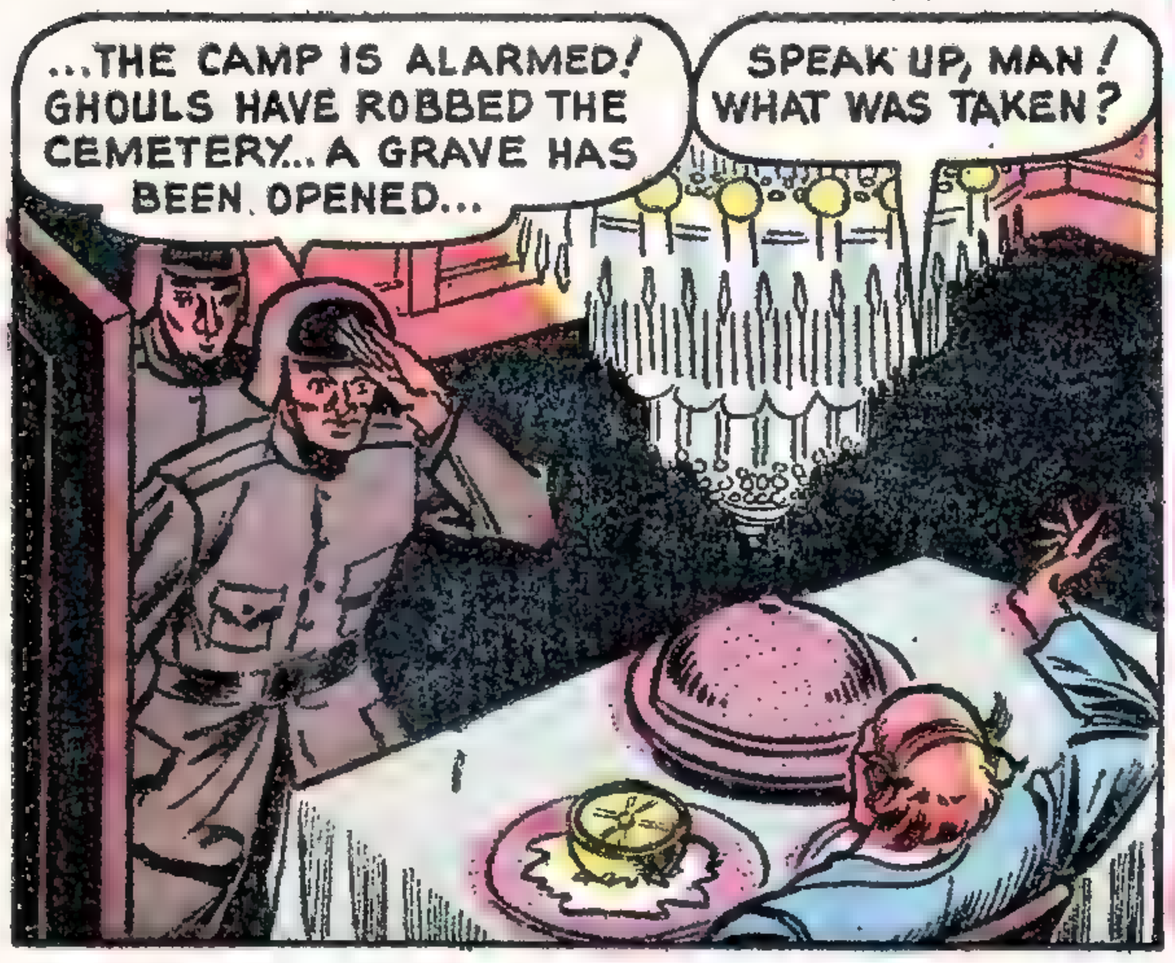


THE DESPERATE SLEEPLESS MAN HAS ORDERED THE GRAVE EXHUMED AND IS NOW FRANTICALLY SEVERING THE LEGS OF ROLFE'S SKELETON...

AND BURCH MADE SURE THE LEGS WERE BURNED.. HE DID THE JOB HIMSELF...


NOW YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY IN YOUR GRAVE... MINUS LEGS YOU'LL WALK NO MORE! YOURS SHALL BE BURNED!
AHHHH! I'VE OUTSMARTED HIM THIS TIME! HA HA HA!

MINUS HIS LEGS ROLFE WAS AGAIN BURIED! NOW BURCH ENJOYS REFRESHING SLEEP, FOLLOWED BY A DELICIOUS BREAKFAST BUT IT IS INTERRUPTED BY TWO CALLERS...



THE END

Paris, city of light and beauty, but what terrible secret lay buried beneath its cobblestones? When Inspector Vidac found the lurid answer, he learned, too late, that no one lived who knew the dread cause of...

TERROR IN THE STREETS!

NIGHT COMES TO PARIS, AS DOWN A LONELY, COBBLESTONED STREET, A HEARSE TRUNDLES ITS CASKET BEARING A DEAD MAN TO A FUNERAL PARLOR...

NO! NO! YOU CAN'T DRAG ME BELOW INTO YOUR VILE SUBTERRANEAN LAIR!

WELCOME, INSPECTOR VIDAC, TO THE SEWERS OF PARIS WHERE WE RULE! BUT REMEMBER -- ONLY THE DEAD COME TO US!

SUDDENLY, THE SEWER COVER MOVES! A WHITE, GHOSTLY HAND PUSHES IT OPEN! A HAND, ALMOST HUMAN, BUT ITS SICKLY WHITENESS HINTS OF SOME FANTASTIC CREATURE WHO MOCKS MAN BY ITS SIMILAR APPEARANCE...

Beware #8, March 1954. Art: Sid Check. Publisher: Trojan Magazines.

OUT FROM THE DANK, FOUL SEWER'S DEPTHS COME THE GHOST-LIKE CREATURES, HUNCHED AND TERRIFYING, THEIR COAL-BLACK EYES STARING WITH EVIL FASCINATION AT THE RUMBLING HEARSE AHEAD...

SILENTLY, THEIR BARE, WHITE FEET PAD ACROSS THE COBBLESTONES, WITH SURPRISING SPEED, AS THE STRANGE, HUMAN-LIKE MONSTERS SPRING UPON THE HEARSE DRIVER...

WITH GREEDY HANDS THEY PRY OPEN THE COFFIN AND PULL THE COLD CORPSE FROM IT! DOWN THE STREET THEY RACE, CLUTCHING THEIR PRIZE...

THEN THEIR CLAMMY, WHITE HANDS PASS THE CORPSE DOWNWARD INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE GRIMY SEWER, AS ONLY A SCAVENGING RAT WATCHES THE WEIRD SIGHT...

LATER, IN THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF THE FRENCH SURETÉ, INSPECTOR VIDAC MAKES HIS GRIM REPORT...

NO, CHIEF, WE'VE FOUND NO SIGN OF THOSE BODY-SNATCHERS! THIS IS THE TENTH CASE OF A STOLEN CORPSE IN A MONTH AND I AM MORE THAN EVER CONVINCED MY THEORY WAS RIGHT!

...YOU MEAN YOUR RIDICULOUS BELIEF THAT THE BODIES ARE STOLEN AND SECRETED *UNDERGROUND?* NONSENSE!

BUT WE HAVE COMBED EVERY STREET NEAR THE SCENES OF THOSE MORBID CRIMES! WHERE ELSE COULD THE BODIES BE HIDDEN? LET ME SEARCH FOR THE CRIMINALS *BELOW* THE STREETS OF PARIS!

CERTAINLY--BUT ON YOUR OWN TIME! I CANNOT OFFICIALLY APPROVE SUCH A RIDICULOUS PROJECT! BELOW PARIS THERE IS ONLY ONE THING... *SEWERS* AND NOT DEAD MEN!

AS NIGHT SHROUDS THE PARIS STREETS BELOW THEM, VIDAC CARRIES OUT HIS DETERMINED MISSION...

ALMOST TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, DURING THE REVOLUTION, FUGITIVES FROM THE GUILLOTINE TOOK REFUGE IN THE CITY'S SEWERS! IT'S STILL A PERFECT HIDING PLACE FOR STRANGE CRIMINALS-- SUCH AS THESE MYSTERIOUS AND AS YET UNSEEN BODY-SNATCHERS!

AS INSPECTOR VIDAC MAKES HIS WAY DOWN THE GLOOMY, SILENT PASSAGES, COLD, DARK EYES WATCH WITH HOSTILITY...

NOT A SIGN OF ANYTHING SO FAR-- PERHAPS THE CHIEF WAS RIGHT!

SUDDENLY, FROM A DARKENED CORNER, A WHITE, GHOST-LIKE HAND SHOOTS OUT...

DOWN THE VILE WATERWAY, VIDAC SWIRLS, REACHING FOR SUPPORT...

GOT IT! BUT I'M CERTAIN OF ONE THING NOW-- A *HUMAN HAND* PUSHED ME IN!

AS VIDAC EMERGES INTO THE DIMLY LIT STREETS, A SHOUT PIERCES THE NIGHT AND WEIRD FIGURES SCURRY ACROSS THE COBBLESTONES AHEAD...

THE CRY CAME FROM THE FUNERAL PARLOR AND WHOEVER THOSE PEOPLE ARE, THEY SEEM TO BE CARRYING A *CORPSE!*

THE HUNCHED CREATURES SCAMPER CLOSER, AS VIDAC FREEZES HALF IN TERROR AT THE SIGHT OF THE GROTESQUE SHAPES, BUSY AT THEIR NIGHTMARE LABORS...

FANTASTIC--YET IT *IS* WHAT I PREDICTED ALL ALONG! THOSE SUBTERRANEAN MONSTERS ARE THE BODY-SNATCHERS AND THEIR LURID DEEDS MUST BE STOPPED!

AS THE GHOST-LIKE CREATURES DISAPPEAR INTO THE SEWER OPENING, INSPECTOR VIDAC RACES FOR IT...

CLOSED! LOCKED FROM THE INSIDE! THE CUNNING DEVILS MUST HAVE SEEN ME!

WITH MORBID FASCINATION, INSPECTOR VIDAC WATCHES THE GRIM DESPOILATION OF THE CREATURES' STOLEN PRIZE...

I WAS RIGHT... THEY ARE SOME MAD MUTATION OF THE HUMAN RACE! THEIR ANCESTORS MUST HAVE BEEN FORCED UNDERGROUND! AND NOW, THE DWELLERS OF THE SEWERS ARE SCAVENGERS OF FLESH!

BUT I AM TELLING YOU WHAT I ACTUALLY SAW! HUNCHED WHITE MONSTERS!

GET OUT! GET OUT!

THERE THEY ARE! OUT OF REACH BUT IN SIGHT! TH-THEY'RE GATHERING AROUND THE CORPSE LIKE *HUMAN VULTURES* OVER CARRION!

INSPECTOR VIDAC RACES TO HIS CHIEF'S HOME AND HIS PERSISTENT KNOCKING, ROUSES HIS SUPERIOR FROM SLEEP...

SIR, WHAT I HAVE IMAGINED *IS* TRUE! EVEN WORSE! THE BODY-STEALERS ARE *UNDERGROUND CREATURES!* THEY LIVE IN THE SEWERS OF PARIS!

DID YOU WAKE ME TO TELL ME THIS WILD TALE, VIDAC? I'LL HAVE YOU PUT OFF THE FORCE FOR THIS!

ANGRY WORDS ECHO IN THE HALL! AGAIN THE CHIEF TRIES TO PUSH VIDAC FROM THE ROOM, AS THE ANGERED INSPECTOR SHOVES BACK AND SUDDENLY...

UGHH!

D-DEAD!

PIERRE! PIERRE!

PANIC OVERCOMES INSPECTOR VIDAC, AS THE CHIEF'S WIFE STOOPS OVER THE CORPSE...

YOU KILLED HIM, VIDAC! YOU MURDERER! YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS!

ALL DAY, VIDAC FLEES FROM THE SEARCHING GENDARMES, A HUNTED MAN IN A NARROWING CIRCLE OF PURSUIT..

THEY MUST NOT CAPTURE ME! THEY WILL NOT BELIEVE ME AND I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN END THIS TERROR ON THE STREETS!

LATER THAT NIGHT, INSPECTOR VIDAC CIRCLES BACK TO THE FUNERAL PARLOR WHERE THE DEAD CHIEF LIES...

MY HUNCH WAS RIGHT! THEY HAVE COME FOR HIM!

AS VIDAC RACES AFTER THE RAIDERS FROM BELOW, A POLICE WHISTLE SHRILLY SOUNDS...

THEY HAVE SEEN ME! THE GENDARMES ARE AFTER ME!

THE CREATURES LEFT THE COVER OFF! THERE'S REFUGE FOR ME HERE THIS TIME! BUT I'LL NOT REMAIN SAFE HERE LONG IF THOSE MONSTERS SEE ME!

DOWN THE SHADOWY, DAMP PASSAGEWAY, INSPECTOR VIDAC ADVANCES, AS SUDDENLY...

THERE THEY ARE -- AND THE CHIEF'S CORPSE WITH THEM!

TH-THEY SEE ME!

WITH GRIM SILENCE, THE WHITE-FACED HUMAN MOCKERIES, START FOR THE FLEEING VIDAC...

THE SEWER TOP IS LOCKED ... FROM ABOVE!

N-NO! BACK! GET BACK!

HELP! IN THE NAME OF MERCY-- HELP!

GENDARME! I HEARD SOMEONE SCREAMING FROM INSIDE THE SEWER!

IMPOSSIBLE! WE HAVE LOCKED THE SEWERS SO A MURDERER CANNOT ESCAPE IN THEM! WHAT YOU HEARD WAS THE WATER PASSING BELOW!

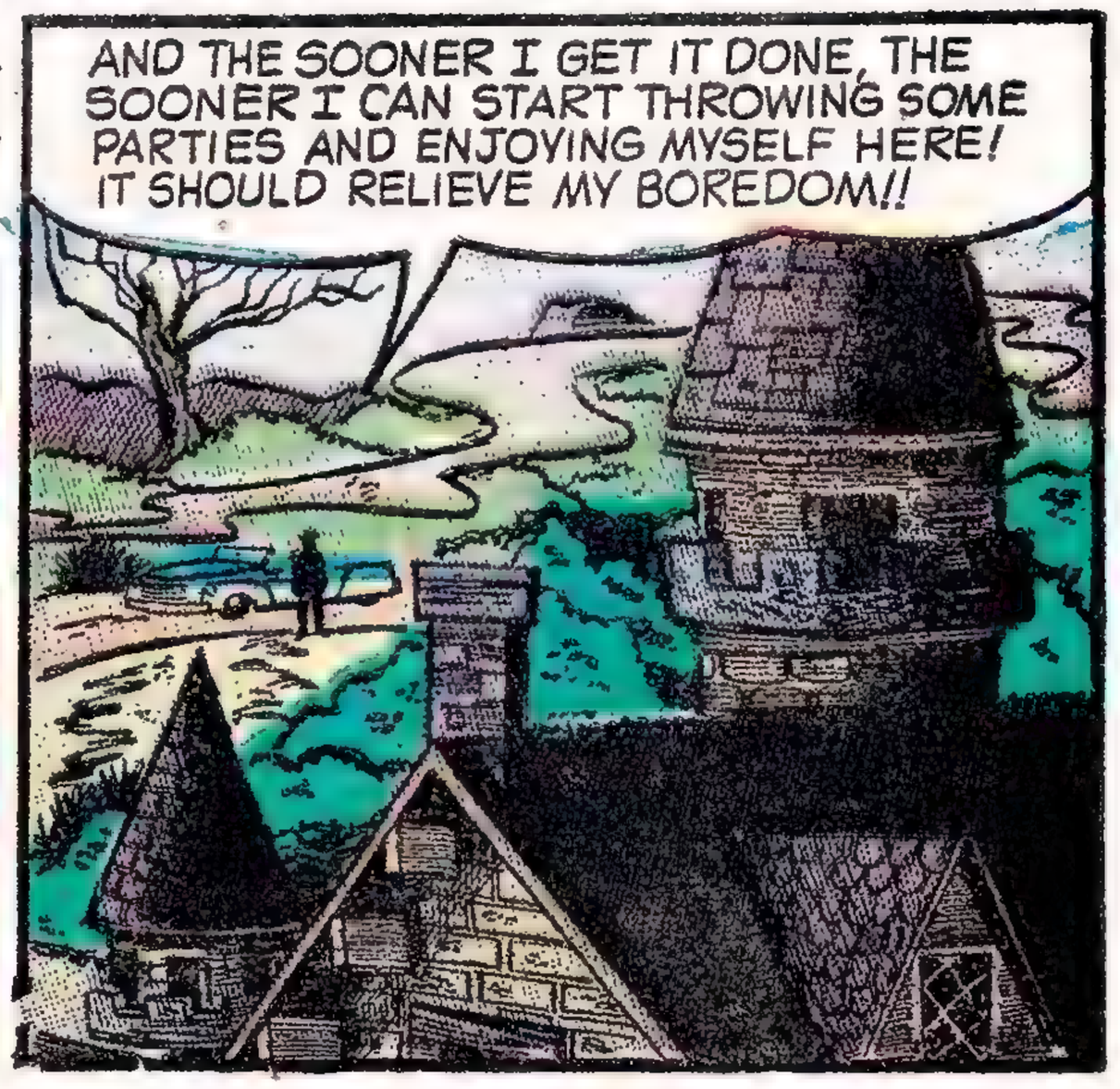
L-LET ME GO! WHAT HAVE YOU TO DO WITH THE LIVING? I KNOW YOUR SECRET-- YOU PREY UPON THE DEAD!

YOU KNOW OUR SECRET... BUT NO ONE ELSE SHALL! DO NOT WORRY -- YOU WILL NOT LONG BE AMONG THE LIVING!

ROBERT BAKER, AN EVIL PLAYBOY, WAS INTENT UPON TURNING HIS ANCIENT ANCESTRAL CASTLE INTO A PERSONAL CIDATEL OF FRIVOLITY! BUT HIS OWN TYRANNY TRANSFORMED HIS LAVISHLY DECORATED DRAWING ROOM INTO A...

DEN OF HORROR

ROBERT BAKER, SOON AFTER ARRIVING IN ENGLAND TO RE-OPEN THE LEGENDARY CASTLE THAT HAS BEEN IN HIS FAMILY FOR CENTURIES, LOOKS UPON THE IMPOSING STRUCTURE FOR THE FIRST TIME...


AND THE SOONER I GET IT DONE, THE SOONER I CAN START THROWING SOME PARTIES AND ENJOYING MYSELF HERE! IT SHOULD RELIEVE MY BOREDOM!!

Weird Terror #3, January 1953. Attributed to Rudy Palais. Publisher: Comic Media.

AND AS THE SPOILED PLAYBOY CONTEMPLATES THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE...!

THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT A PARTY IS UNTIL THEY'VE SEEN---WHAA--- WHO ARE YOU??

YOU UGLY, OLD WITCH!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON MY LAND?

AAGGRR.. LET ME GO!!

BAKER RELEASES THE OLD WOMAN HEAVILY AND THEN LISTENS TO HER WIERD TALE!!

WELL? YOU ARE THE LAST SURVIVOR OF YOUR FAMILY, ROBERT BAKER. A FAMILY CURSED BY THE SPIRIT OF A SERVANT YOUR GREAT-GRANDFATHER BEAT TO DEATH WITH A WHIP IN THIS CASTLE!!

IT IS SAID THAT THE MAN HAS WALKED THE EARTH EVER SINCE!

BESIDES BEING UGLY AND DIRTY, YOU'RE A FOOL!

HE WALKS, ROBERT BAKER AND AWAITS HIS CHANCE FOR VENGEANCE!

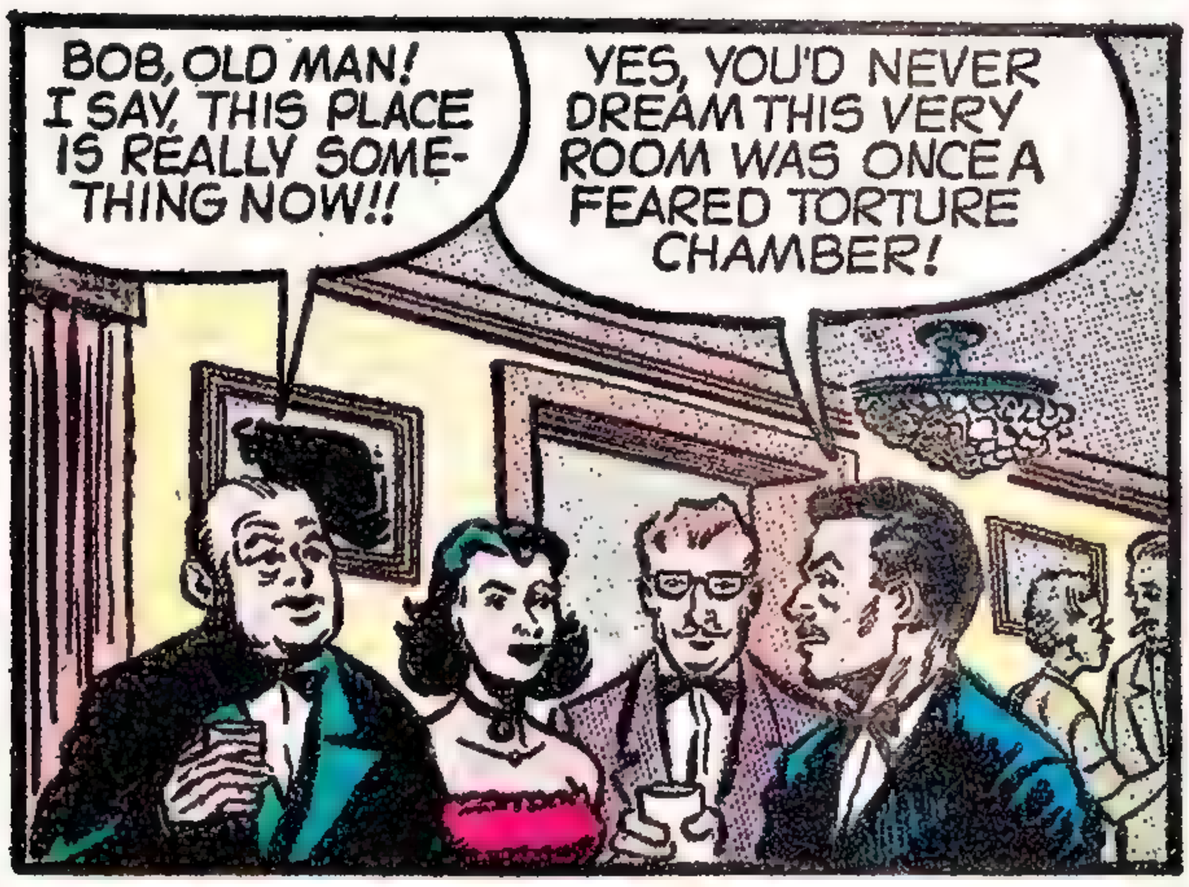
BUT THE EVIL TEMPERED MILLIONAIRE SOON LOSES PATIENCE WITH HIS STRANGE AND WIERD VISITOR...!!

ENOUGH! IT'S SHEER DRIVEL! GET OFF MY GROUNDS, YOU FILTHY HAG!!

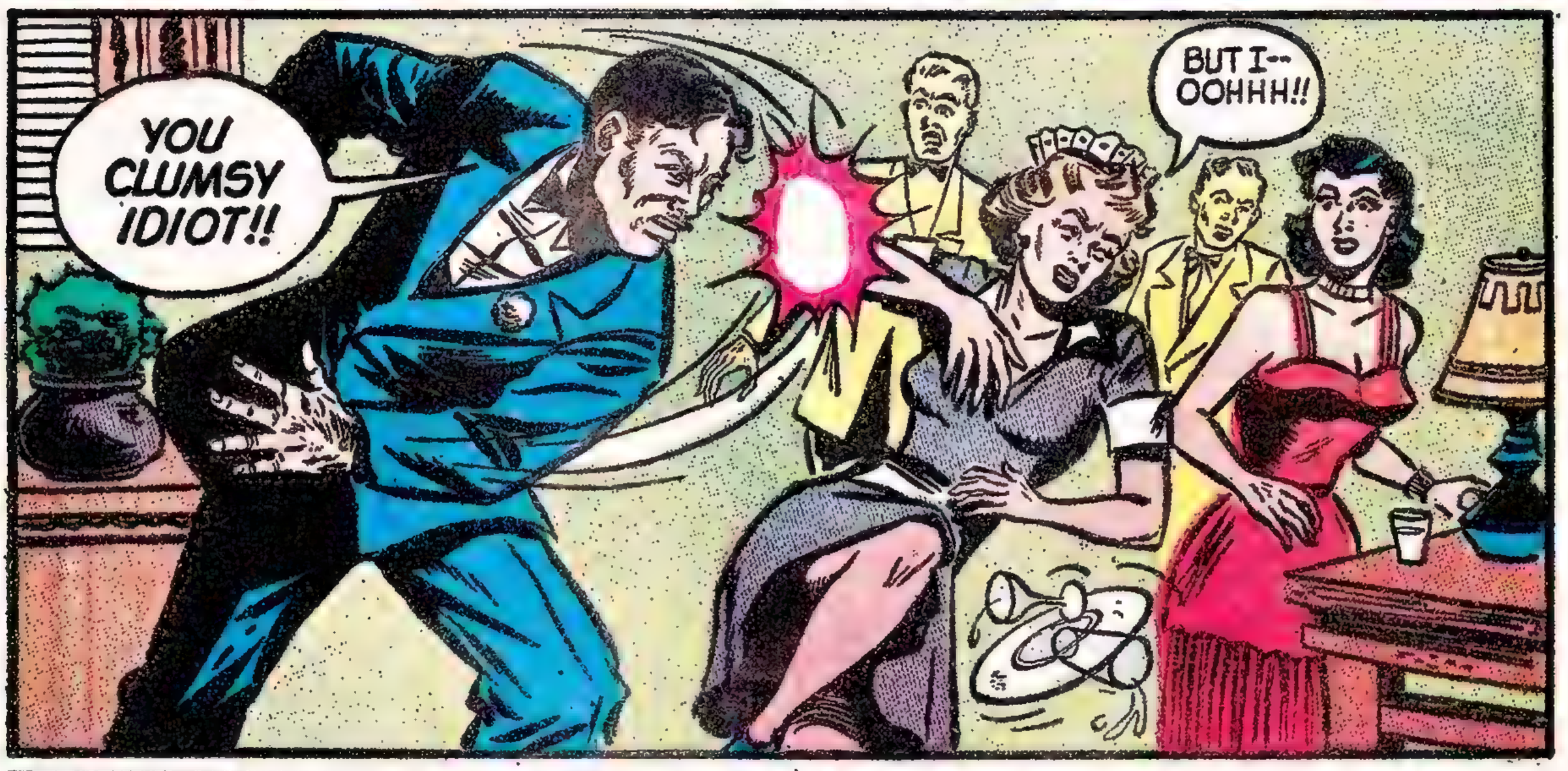
AND DON'T COME BACK OR I'LL KILL YOU!!

HEED MY WORDS WELL, ROBERT BAKER!! HE WHO LIVES BY THE WHIP OFTEN DIES BY THE **SAME** WHIP! YOU'RE EVIL ANCESTOR HAS COME TO KNOW THIS WELL!

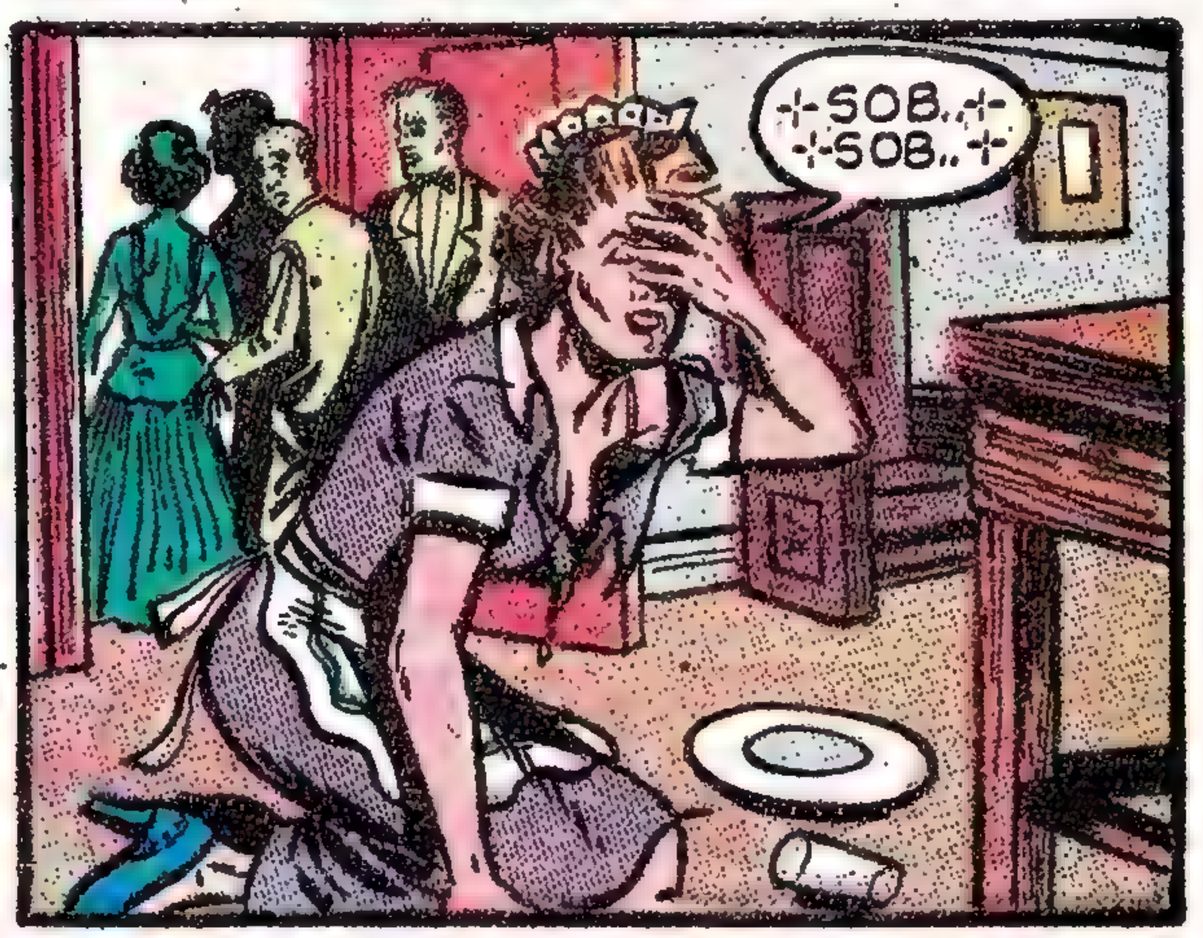
DISREGARDING THE STRANGE WORDS OF THE OLD CRONE, BAKER HURRIES THE CASTLE'S RENOVATIONS TO COMPLETION AND, AFTER HIRING A STAFF OF LOCAL SERVANTS, INVITES HIS WEALTHY FRIENDS TO HIS FIRST PARTY!



BUT AT THE HEIGHT OF THE FESTIVITIES...

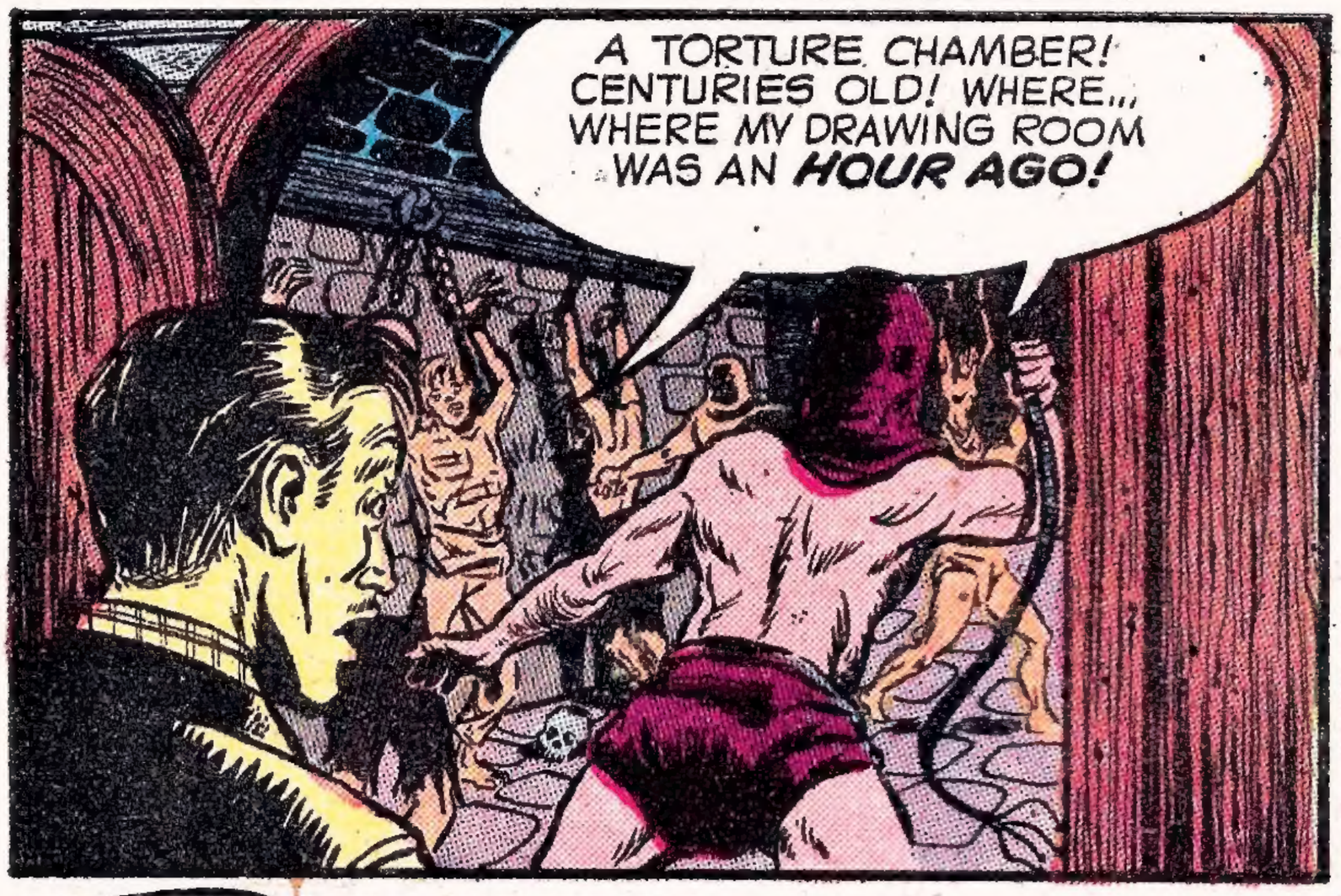


BLIND WITH RAGE, THE VICIOUS PLAYBOY LEAVES THE SERVANT GIRL WHERE SHE FALLS AND MOVES HIS PARTY TO ANOTHER WING OF THE CASTLE TO CONTINUE THEIR CELEBRATION AND MERRIMENT!



AND THAT NIGHT, AS HIS GUESTS SLEEP, BAKER IS AWAKENED BY A PIERCING, AGONIZED, BLOOD-CURDLING SHRIEK!!

BAKER GOES TO THE DRAWING ROOM.... TO WITNESS A FANTASTIC SIGHT THAT MAKES HIS BLOOD RUN COLD!!



OVERPOWERED BY HIS HIDEOUS PURSUERS AND COMPLETELY HELPLESS IN THEIR DIABOLICAL GRIP, BAKER IS DRAGGED BACK INTO THE GRUESOME CHAMBER!

AAAIEEEE

DIE, BAKER! DIE AS YOUR GREAT-GRANDFATHER KILLED OTHERS!

YOU HAVE FOLLOWED THE WAYS OF YOUR EVIL ANCESTORS--NOW YOU SHALL PAY FOR BOTH OF YOU!!

STOP!...I-I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING... I'LL--GASP-- MONEY--GASP-!

.....AND DIES DISMALLY... AS THE BLOOD DRIPS STEADILY FROM HIS TORN BODY!

GASP+...I...I'LL PAY YOU ANYTHING "ANY--THING..." UUGGHHRRR!!

HIS BODY WRACKED WITH PAIN, BAKER SAGS IN EXCRUCIATING AGONY!

THE NEXT MORNING, BAKER'S GUESTS GATHER FOR BREAKFAST... UNAWARE OF THE MACABRE EVENTS THAT HAD TRANSPIRED DURING THE NIGHT!

BOB'S NOT IN HIS ROOM!!

AND NONE OF THE SERVANTS SAW HIM LEAVE!... NO ONE'S SEEN HIM SINCE .....LAST NIGHT!!

SEARCHING THE RAMBLING CASTLE FOR THEIR MISSING HOST, BAKER'S GUESTS COME UPON THE PLUSH DRAWING ROOM.... SCENE OF THE PREVIOUS EVENING'S PARTY!

NO!!..IT CAN'T BE!

IT'S BOB!

GOOD LORD!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN...? THIS WHIP WITH BOB'S GREAT-GRANDFATHER'S NAME ENGRAVED ON IT!

AND THIS LOCKET! THIS LOCKETON WAS **MY** GREAT-GRANDFATHER! WHO HAD BEEN LASHED TO DEATH BY MR. BAKER'S ***GREAT-GRANDFATHER!!***

HAVING ACHIEVED HIS STRANGE AND ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE REVENGE, THE SERVANT GIRL'S ANCESTOR WALKS THE EARTH NO MORE! FOR ROBERT BAKER'S EVIL LIFE HAS BEEN FORFEITED AS JUST PAYMENT FOR HIS GREAT-GRANDFATHER'S TYRANNY! AND HIS OWN!!

THE END

Tyrant Lizard Kings
EMPIRE